A Short DEFENCE OF THE Church and Clergy OF ENGLAND.

WHEREIN

Some of the common Objections againſt Both are Anſwered:

AND THE

MEANS of *UNION*

Briefly Conſidered.

By Robert Grove, D.D.

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A SHORT

A SHORT DEFENCE OF THE Church and Clergy OF ENGLAND.

SECT. I.

THEY that ſee only the outſide of Affairs, but cannot diſcover the ſecret hinges upon which they turn, muſt needs think it very ſtrange that after all the talk there has been about it, and the apparent neceſſity that is confeſſed to be of it, there ſhould be ſo little done towards a firm and hearty Union of the Proteſtant Intereſt. It was hoped at firſt that when the horrid deſigns of our Popiſh Enemies to eſtabliſh their Religion by the moſt trayterous and bloody methods, were laid ſo plainly before us, our common danger ſhould have made us more treatable, and that the fear of being devoured by ſuch a ravenous Monſter, might have put an end to the petty contentions amongſt our ſelves. At leaſt one

would have thought that they ſhould have been managed with more moderation, and without any perſonal and uncharitable reflexions. But inſtead of this, the eſtabliſhed *Church* and *Clergy* of *England*, whoſe ruine was chiefly aimed at in this helliſh Conſpiracy, are openly traduced, and publickly aſſaulted with popular Clamours, as if they did but faintly oppoſe, if not ſecretly endeavour to inſlave the Nation to the tyranny of *Rome*. The miſcarriages of a few, have been improved to the diſparagement of all. Some have come purpoſely to hear their Sermons, that they might quarrel with them, and catch at every word that could give them any pretence for a cavil. They have been libelled in moſt of the Pamphlets that come abroad, in this great liberty that the Preſs has lately taken. Some that would be thought to argue againſt them with the greateſt ſmartneſs, have turned the whole controverſie into a kind of grinning drollery; and anſwered the moſt learned, grave, and ſerious Writings, with nothing but an empty bravado, and the moſt ſcurrilous, and disingenuous contempt. As if our differences, and the ſad effects they may ſtill have, were a ſubject to be plaid with, by an idle trifling Fancy: Or that their Wits were ſo very rampant, and ungovernable, that they ſcorned to be checked by the rules of decency, or the ſeverer laws of Conſcience. Nay ſome of the known Profeſſors of Debauchery, men whoſe Principles are as licentious as their lives, are become zealous Advocates for our diſſenting Brethren; and they that are ſo wonderfully ſuſpicious of the Conformiſts, do not ſeem to be at all jealous of theſe; they applaud, and cry them up, and are willing to intruſt them with their greateſt concerns: As if they were fit inſtruments

ments to promote a Reformation, who make it their chief buſineſs to baffle, and laugh at all manner of Religion. I do not wonder that the declared Enemies of God ſhould hate the ſetled Miniſtry of his word; nor do I much admire that they that are paſſionately ingaged in a Cauſe, ſhould make uſe of all the aſſiſtance they can get to ſupport it. But this appears very ſtrange indeed, that men piouſly diſpoſed, as I hope many of our diſſenting Brethren are, can ever imagine that prophaneſs can be in earneſt when it pretends to favour a purer way of Worſhip; or that they can have any concern for other mens Conſciences, that have no reverence at all for their own. Or if they could be ſuppoſed really to intend the advancement of Piety, which is very incredible; yet it can ſcarce be thought that the Divine Providence would be ſo pleaſed with their preſent officiouſneſs, as to ſuffer any Religious deſign to proſper long in ſuch wicked, and unholy hands. Or if they are to be uſed but for the time, till the eſtabliſhed Church be over-thrown, and then laid aſide as ſoon as the buſineſs ſhall be effected: It is dangerous compaſſing our ends by the help of ſuch Auxiliaries as theſe are. It has been often known that when foreign forces have been called in to ſubdue a potent Adverſary at home; they have done the work for which they came, and then turned their armes upon them that deſired their aid, and made ſlaves of thoſe that thought to have gained their liberty by that aſſiſtance. And I wiſh that when men of looſe and prophane Principles are invited, at leaſt permitted to join their indeavours for the ruine of our Church, it may not give them too fair an occaſion to triumph over all, and become the only victorious and prevail-

ing Party at the laſt. However this may be; it is manifeſt enough that the Romiſh Emiſſaries have always uſed the greateſt ſubtilty and diligence to undermine the Engliſh Church; and the method which they have conſtantly purſued, as the moſt effectual for this end, is to foment the diſſentions which their cunning, and our own folly have bred amongſt us. But yet I cannot tell how it happens, that when we have the greateſt apprehenſions of danger from them, we carry on the ſame project which they had laid; and weaken our ſelves by our unhappy diviſions, juſt as they deſire it ſhould be. That Church which they have envyed the moſt, is deſerted and reproached by thoſe that received their Baptiſm in it; the ſeveral Parties that have ſeparated from it, agree in nothing more than the unanimous outcrys they make againſt it; the noiſe has been ſo great and univerſal, that many that were ſatisfied with the preſent Conſtitution, begin to imagine they cannot be Enemies enough unto Popery, if they continue their friendſhip to the Church of *England*. Did I believe there were the leaſt ground for ſuch jealouſies as ſome have entertained, I confeſs I ſhould be tempted to ſwim with the ſtream, and ſuffer my ſelf to be born down by the tyde of popular opinion. But becauſe I am perſwaded, upon the moſt impartial eſtimate that I have been able to make, that theſe ſuſpicions are meerly imaginary; and that they may be impoſed upon the credulous, and unwary multitude, to promote ſome deſigns we are not yet acquainted with; and that they will certainly ſerve no other, but Popiſh purpoſes in the end: I ſhall therefore ſhew, as plainly as I can in this ſhort treatiſe, That the *Conſtitution* of the *Church* of *England* is ſuch, as

as need not give any matter of offence to the Conſcience of any good Chriſtian; I ſhall then anſwer the moſt common and popular Objections that are wont to be made againſt this *Conſtitution*, and the *Clergy* that conform unto it; and laſtly conſider the means of *Union* that have been hitherto propoſed. And in diſcourſing of theſe things I ſhall keep my ſelf, as much as may be, on the defenſive ſide, and ſtrive only to ward off the blows that are made at us, without endeavouring to wound the hand from whence they come. And that I may, if it be poſſible, avoid giving the leaſt offence, I ſhall not ſo much as name the Authors from whence I take the Objections I endeavour to anſwer, but make choice of ſuch as I have obſerved to be moſt uſually inſiſted on of late; and ſome others which have been ſpread abroad, to no other end that I can conceive, but to incenſe the minds of men againſt us, and raiſe animoſities at ſuch a time, as the moſt calm and peaceable Counſels would be more ſeaſonable, and of greater advantage to the Proteſtant Cauſe. And therefore I do here ſolemnly profeſs that I ſhall not ſay any thing out of partiality, or any ſiniſter reſpect whatſoever, or any ill will I ever bore to any of our Non-Conforming brethren, by ſome of which I have been moſt particularly obliged, and I love them all as men, and more eſpecially as Chriſtians; But as a compaſſionate member of a poor deſpiſed Church, that has been made the mark of common obloquy and ſcorn, I ſhall declare her innocency as publickly as I can, now that I take her to be in ſo much danger of ruine, from the ſettled and deliberate malice of Popiſh Agents, and the inconſiderate heat of other Adverſaries; that will dearly repent it, when it is done, if they ſhould ever be ſo unfortu-

unfortunate as to ſucceed in ſuch an attempt.

I cannot have ſo bad an opinion of all, but that they may ſee what a Church ſome of them could wiſh deſtroyed, I ſhall briefly lay open the Principal parts of the *Conſtitution* of it, as it conſiſts in *Epiſcopacy*, *Liturgy*, and *Eccleſiaſtical Laws*. Of theſe I ſhall treat but very briefly, and only to give what ſatisfaction I can, to thoſe that have not leiſure, or skill to peruſe thoſe many large and learned diſcourſes that have been formerly, and ſome very lately written upon theſe Subjects.

SECT II.

Epiſcopacy, or the Government of one *Biſhop* over many *Presbyters*, is a thing ſo very antient, that it ſeems to have been propagated in the World by the firſt Planters of the Chriſtian Religion. That the Apoſtles had ſuch an authority will not be denyed; and that they communicated the like authority to others, is no leſs evident in the Examples of *Timothy* and *Titus*; and to affirm that this power of theirs, over many *Presbyters*, was only temporary, and perſonal, and that it was to ceaſe as ſoon as the Apoſtles, and thoſe immediately conſtituted by them, were dead, is an aſſertion altogether precarious. For the Scripture makes no mention of it; and there is no reaſon to imagine that that Government which was once eſtabliſhed in the Church, ſhould be afterwards altered, unleſs it had been declared by them that did eſtabliſh it, that it was to continue but for ſuch a period of time. And if any, without ſuch a declaration, ſhall maintain that the Apoſtolical, and *Epiſcopal* power is now wholly ceaſed; others upon the ſame

ſame principle may contend that the *Presbyterial* power is ceaſed too; and as they ſay that every *Presbyter* is become a *Biſhop*, ſo theſe will plead that every Chriſtian is to be a *Presbyter*; though it might not be ſo at the firſt inſtitution.

But beſides that the Scripture does not acquaint us that this power was ever to ceaſe, the whole current of antiquity runs ſtrongly againſt it. The oldeſt and moſt Authentick writers of the Church do generally acknowledge the *Epiſcopal* Authority; and look upon *Biſhops* as the [a] ſucceſſours of the Apoſtles in their ordinary power, and Juriſdiction. And ſometimes in their diſputes with Hereticks, they appeal to the Records that were then extant, to ſhew how they [b] ſucceeded one another from the Apoſtles, down to their own times. And this is enough to prove what opinion they had of the Original and continuance of the *Epiſcopal* power.

[a] Iren. adv. Hæreſ. l. 3. c. 3. Cyprian. ad Rogat. Epiſt. 65.

[b] Iren. lib. 4. c. 63. Tertul. de præſcript. c. 32.

But if we wanted theſe teſtimonies, and were not able to derive the ſucceſſion ſo high as we can; yet this is confeſſed by the moſt zealous, and learned oppoſers of *Epiſcopal* Government, that ſuch *Biſhops* as we contend for, were univerſally allowed, very ſoon after the deceaſe of the Apoſtles. And I do not think that any one can name one Church that had not a *Biſhop* in it, in thoſe firſt and pureſt ages of Chriſtianity; and when other corruptions crept in, they were not ſo great and bold as to attempt the ſubverſion of that truly Primitive Government. And when ſome in theſe latter times have endeavoured to contrive another kind of Eccleſiaſtical order, they ſeem to have been forced upon it rather out of neceſſity, than choice. They did not ſo much prefer their own model before the antient one, but when they could not have

have this, they were fain to content themſelves with that. They that framed and promoted the Diſcipline of *Geneva* the moſt, have ſpoken very honourably of the Engliſh *Epiſcopacy*. And many learned Men that have lived quietly under that Conſtitution, have thought ours the more deſirable; and there have been none, that I know of, beyond the Seas, but that have readily acknowledged that it might at leaſt be allowed: So far have they been from calling it Popiſh or Anti-Chriſtian; that is a Complement that none but a diſobedient Son could beſtow upon ſo good a Mother.

But we need not come ſo low as theſe latter ages to ſeek for Authorities to confirm the *Epiſcopal* Juriſdiction; it was the Government that was always owned and exerciſed amongſt the firſt Chriſtians. And they were wont to ſettle their *Biſhops* in places of the greateſt confluence, in Cities, whither the people did uſually reſort, from the neighbouring Villages, and leſſer Towns, for the convenience of Trade, and adminiſtration of Juſtice. And becauſe in every Province there was one Capital City, or Metropolis, where the chief Secular Magiſtrate had his ordinary reſidence; they had there a *Biſhop* which was firſt called a *Metropolitan*, and afterwards an *Archbiſhop*; who had an authority over the ſeveral *Biſhops* within the whole Province. And in ſome parts of the Roman Empire there were *Biſhops* that were ſtiled *Patriarchs*, who had a certain Superiority over the *Metropolitans* themſelves.

The order that was obſerved amongſt them ſeems to be this: The inferiour City had a *Biſhop*, who with the aſſiſtance of a number of *Presbyters* under him, had the Eccleſiaſtical care of the Territory that belonged

belonged to his City; in the chief City was a *Metropolitan* or *Archbiſhop*, and without him there were [a] ſome things that were not to be done by the other Biſhops; and in ſome parts there were *Patriarchs* that had the inſpection of divers Provinces. And herein the Eccleſiaſtical honour followed the Civil; and in thoſe places where the ſecular Governour had the greateſt power, the Authority of the *Biſhop* was increaſed in ſome degree proportionable to that.

[a] Can. Apoſt. 34. Concil. Antioch. Can. 9.

And this indeed, and not his being the pretended Vicar of Chriſt, or the ſucceſſor of S. *Peter*, is the true reaſon of all the preheminence that the *Biſhop* of *Rome* could ever lay claim unto. He was *Biſhop* of the Capital City of the Empire, and upon that account might have the honour of precedency; but was never acknowledged to be the Univerſal Paſtor, that had a power of commanding the whole Catholick Church. He had the ſame Authority, and no more, within his own Precincts, as other *Patriarchs* and *Metropolitans* had in theirs. What ever the Priviledges of the *Biſhop* of *Rome* were, it is well known that the *Biſhop* of *Conſtantinople* had the ſame conferred upon him, by the decree of ſeveral Councils; and the reaſon that is given for it is this, becauſe it was [b] new *Rome*, and an Imperial City as well as the old.

[b] Concil. Conſtantinop. can. 3. Chalced. can. 28. Trul. can. 36.

But it is clear that this diſtinction I have been ſpeaking of is very antient. We find mention of a *Patriarch*, very probably of *Alexandria*, in an [c] Epiſtle of the Emperour *Adrian*; which muſt be written within about a hundred years after the paſſion of our Saviour. In the firſt general [a] Council at *Nice*, the power of *Metropolitans* was confirmed, and then accounted, by the Fathers aſſembled there, amongſt the antient cuſtoms of the Church. So that it is evident

[c] Apud Flav. Vopiſc. in Saturnin.

[a] Canon. 6.

vident what the judgement of Antiquity was in the case of *Episcopacy*; they did not only allow of the Superiority of *Bishops* over *Presbyters*, but gave the *Metropolitan* some power over the other *Bishops*; which was very agreeable to the form of Government that was exercised in the time of the Apostles.

Now all the Christians in the World make up but one Catholick Church, and the several portions and subdivisions of that, whether smaller or greater, have the same name, and are called Churches, as the whole is. Thus we may read of the Eastern, Western, or African Church, which did consist of divers Provinces; and of the Church of *Hierusalem*, *Antioch*, or *Corinth*, which were *Episcopal*, or *Metropolitical* Churches; and thus every particular assembly of Christians, meeting orderly together for the worship of God, may be called a Church. For in homogeneous bodies where the nature of all the parts is the same, they do properly take the same denomination with the whole; thus every Bucket or drop that is of it, is water, as well as the Ocean. And thus have all Christians spoken of Churches, without any scruple, in all ages. But that there are no Churches but *Congregational* only, is an opinion which I take to be exceeding modern. And I will endeavour to make it appear, in the instances of *Jerusalem* and *Corinth*, that it was otherwise in the most Primitive times.

The Christian Religion, by the blessing of God, spread it self so fast at *Jerusalem*, that within a short time after the miraculous descent of the holy Ghost we find that [a] *many of them which heard the word, believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.* And soon after that [b] *Believers were the more added*

[a] Act. 4. 4.

[b] Act. 5. 14.

added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. And again, [c] *the word of God increaſed; and the number of the Diſciples multiplied in Jeruſalem greatly; and a great company of the Prieſts were obedient to the faith.* Now if we conſider theſe expreſſions, and the mighty numbers that were wont to be converted by the Apoſtles preaching, we may well conceive that by this time they might be augmented from five to ten or twelve thouſand, or it may be more. But ſuppoſe them not to amount to above ſeven or eight thouſand; which is the leaſt that can be reaſonably imagined; theſe how many ſoever there were of them, did all make but [d] one *Church*; but it cannot be thought that they met all in the ſame place, and that they made but one ſingle *Congregation*. For if there were no other Preachers there beſides them, yet the Apoſtles were all at *Jeruſalem* at that time; and then one of them muſt have gathered a Church, but the reſt could have none; if it be ſuppoſed to have been but one *Congregation*. But not to inſiſt upon this. If they were but one *Congregation*, in what place could they poſſibly meet together for the publick exerciſe of their Religion? If hated and perſecuted as they were, they durſt have adventured upon erecting of a building capacious enough for ſo vaſt a multitude, they had not yet done it. When they aſſembled themſelves, it was in ſome private houſe, and commonly in an *upper room*; and what beams and rafters were able to bear them? or what Palace had a Hall large enough to contain ſuch huge numbers, as muſt flock together upon their ſolemn times of Worſhip? Or if theſe difficulties were removed; the unbelieving Jews were their ſworn and moſt implacable enemies, and would not have ſuffered ſo many of them

[c] Act. 6. 7.

[d] Act. 8. 1.

to meet, without the moſt violent oppoſition, and ſetting the whole City in an uproar againſt them. Or if their malice could, the vigilancy of the Roman Government would never have indured it. They were extreamly jealous of every great and unuſual concourſe of people; and would be more ſo in a Nation that had not been very long conquered, and accuſtomed to the yoke; eſpecially one ſo ſtubborn, and rebellious, and hated of all the world, as the Jewiſh was. And their jealouſie would have been increaſed, when they had found that this was to be a frequent ſtated meeting, for the exerciſe of a ſtrange Religion, as the Chriſtian was then accounted. For though they were very indulgent to all their conqueſts, in allowing them the free uſe of the old Religion of their Country, they were very fearful and cautious of admitting any new ones. And theſe conſiderations being laid together, it ſeems to me abſolutely incredible, that the Church of *Jeruſalem* ſhould conſiſt but of one particular aſſembly. For when the Chriſtians there were ſo exceedingly multiplied, why ſhould we not think that they had ſo much prudence as to part themſelves into ſeveral *Congregations*; when it is a thing confeſſed to be allowable, and ſometimes neceſſary; and there were Apoſtles, and Teachers ready to inſtruct and edify them all; and they might do it with ſo much greater convenience and ſecurity.

And that they did ſo, beſides the reaſons already alledged, the Text ſeems to intimate plainly enough. [a] *And daily in the Temple, and in every houſe*, that is, *from houſe to houſe*, as the ſame phraſe is [b] before tranſlated, or *in ſome houſes, they ceaſed not to teach and preach Jeſus Chriſt.* They went to the *Temple* whither the

[a] Act. 5. 42.

[b] Act. 2. 46. κατ' οἶκον.

the unconverted Jews did reſort, at the hours of prayer, and preached Chriſt publickly to them there; and at other times they diſpoſed themſelves into the private *houſes* of ſome of them that did believe, and there they farther inſtructed and confirmed thoſe that had already received the Chriſtian Faith. And beſides this there is mention made of their [d] *breaking Bread from houſe to houſe*; and if by *breaking Bread* we are to underſtand the participation of the holy Euchariſt, as I think will not be denyed; then it is clear from hence that they did daily meet in ſeveral houſes to hear the word Preached, and to pray, and receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, and that therefore the Church of *Jeruſalem* had in it at that time divers diſtinct *Congregations*; very probably as many as there were Apoſtles at the leaſt, if no more.

[d] Ibid.

The other inſtance which I ſhall give, in thoſe Apoſtolical times, of a Church that was not meerly *Congregational*, is that of *Corinth*. *Clement* then *Biſhop* of *Rome* writing to that Church, upon occaſion of a great difference that was amongſt them, begins his Epiſtle thus: [a] *The Church of God dwelling in and about Rome, to the Church of God dwelling in and about Corinth.* I think the word παροικοῦσα ſhould be ſo tranſlated here, to comprehend thoſe that dwelt in the Territory that lay round about it, as well as thoſe that lived within the City itſelf; becauſe that this * Epiſtle was written to thoſe that S. *Paul* wrote his; and he wrote his not only to thoſe that were of the City of *Corinth*, but *to all the Saints which were in all Achaia*; and therefore this of *Clement* muſt be written likewiſe to *all the Saints in all Achaia*, whereof *Corinth* was the *Metropolis*; and theſe

[a] Ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ παροικοῦσα Ῥώμῃ, τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ παροικούσῃ Κόρινθον. *Clement.* Epiſt. ad *Corinth.* p. 1,

* Epiſt. *Clem.* ad Cor. p. 61.

2 Cor. 1. 1.

are

are made but one Church by him that was perſonally known to S. *Paul*, and whom he calls his [c] *fellow-labourer*. And this Church being of ſo great extent, muſt conſiſt of many *Congregations*; for he that can believe that there was but one *Congregation* of Chriſtians in *all Achaia*, may be perſwaded in time that there were no more in all *Greece*. If either of theſe inſtances will hold good, it will ſufficiently prove that all Churches in thoſe firſt times were not *Congregational*.

[c] Phil. 4. 3.

I ſhall now make it farther appear that there were *Biſhops* then that had the rule over many *Presbyters*; and of this I ſhall give a few Examples, ſuch as I think may be the moſt convincing.

I begin with S. *James* that is called the [a] *Brother of our Lord*; his near Kinſman to be ſure he was, whatever the particular relation might be. He was not of the number of the twelve Apoſtles, but yet was preferred by them to be the firſt [b] *Biſhop* of *Jeruſalem*, as all Eccleſiaſtical Writers, that mention him, do agree; and there are ſeveral paſſages of Scripture that may ſerve to confirm their Authority, which otherwiſe we have no reaſon to queſtion. For we find him generally reſiding at *Jeruſalem*, and ſometimes with the *Brethren*, or *Elders* about him; if there happened any matter of importance to the Church, it was communicated to him. When the Angel had delivered S. *Peter* out of priſon, he bid them to whom he firſt came *go ſhew theſe things to James and to the Brethren*. When S. *Paul* was returned to *Jeruſalem*, the very next day after his arrival, he gives him an account of the ſucceſs of his Miniſtry among the Gentiles. For he and they that were with him *went in unto James, and all the Elders were preſent*. The *Elders*

[a] Gal. 1. 19.

[b] Vid. Euſeb. lib. 2. c. 1. Hieron. de ſcript. Eccleſ.

Act. 12. 17.

Act. 21. 18.

ders or *Presbyters* were there; but S. *Paul went in unto James* their *Bishop*, and applyed himself more particularly to him. In the first Council that ever was held in the Christian Church, concerning the great controversie, as it was then esteemed, of Circumcision and keeping the Law of *Moses*, after much disputing and debate upon the question, S. *Peter* stood up and gave his opinion; and when some other matters had been discoursed, S. *James* at last resumes the argument again, and determines, as it were in a Judiciary manner: [a] *Wherefore my sentence is.* Which words are observed to carry more of Authority, than those which S. *Peter* had used before: And it became S. *James* so to speak, as being then within his own Dioceſs. And it is farther taken notice of that S. *Paul* mentioning [b] *James, Cephas*, and *John*, puts *James* before the other two, though principal Apostles: becauſe he was speaking of things that were transacted at *Jeruſalem* where *James* had the *Epiſcopal* Juriſdiction. And theſe probabilities, if they be no more, joyned with the unanimous consent of Antiquity, may convince us that *James* governed the Church of *Jeruſalem*, as their *Bishop*; in which there were certainly many *Presbyters*; and it cannot be doubted but that there were divers *Congregations* of Believers, which they did severally edify, and confirm in the Christian Faith.

[a] Διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω. Act. 15. 19.

[b] Gal. 2. 9.

Another example of such a *Bishop* is *Ignatius* of *Antioch*; who is said by some to have been the little Child that our Saviour took up in his arms, and blessed; but though 'tis most likely he was not the Child, yet for his age he might have been; for he was very old when he suffered Martyrdom, which was but about seventy four years after the Death of our Lord.

And

And he *saw our Lord in the Flesh after his Resurrection*, as St. [a] *Jerom* translates his words; but certainly he expresses as much [b] assurance of the thing, as if he had seen it with his own eyes. This holy and Apostolical man is accounted the [c] second *Bishop* of *Antioch*, after S. *Peter* had left that place; he continued some considerable time there, and then was sent from thence to *Rome*, to be torn in pieces by wild Beasts. In that long and tedious journey he wrote Epistles to several Churches, and amongst them to three of those to whom S. *John* had written in the beginning of his Revelation, about twelve years before; and in these he declares the Superiority and power of *Bishops* over *Presbyters* so plainly, and urges it so frequently and passionately, that they that will not allow of such a power, have no greater Argument than this to prove that those Epistles are not genuine.

But I think this will not now be denyed, since it has been lately so clearly demonstrated by a [d] Reverend Prelate of this Nation, in a most learned, and accurate Treatise written purposely on this Subject. In these Epistles he shews a great concern, and desires their prayers for the [e] *Church* in *Syria*; and in one place he calls himself the *Bishop* not of *Antioch* but of [f] *Syria*. And the particular care that he often expresses of the whole *Church* of *Syria*, and the title he takes of being their *Bishop*, do very probably prove that he was *Metropolitan* of that Province, whereof *Antioch* was the chief City; and therefore he cannot be denyed to have had many *Presbyters* under him, and it may be several Diocesan *Bishops*, which very probably were then established in so large a Country as that was.

The last example that I shall bring is that of *Polycarpus*

[a] Ego vero & post Resurrectionem in carne eum vidi. Hieron. de script. Eccles.

[b] Μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἐν σαρκὶ αὐτὸν οἶδα. *Ignat.* Epist. ad Smyrn.

[c] *Euseb.* lib. 3. cap. 22.

[d] *Joan. Pearson* Episc Cestrens. vindic. Epist. S. *Ignat.*

[e] *Ignat.* Epist. ad Ephes. Id. ad Magnes.

[f] Id. in Epist. ad Roman.

carpus of *Smyrna*. He was one that had converſed with [a] S[t] *John*, and other Apoſtles; and as ſome ſay was made *Biſhop* of *Smyrna* by S[t] [b] *John* whoſe ſcholar he was. But [c] *Irenæus* who knew him, and had heard him with great attention, when he diſcourſed of many things that he had heard from S[t] *Johns* own mouth, and from others that had ſeen the Lord; he tells us that he was made [d] *Biſhop* of *Smyrna* by the *Apoſtles*; and if ſo, then this *Polycarpus* muſt be that *Angel of the Church of Smyrna* to whom S[t] *John* writes one of his Epiſtles in the *Revelation*; for that Book of holy Scripture was not written till after the death of the other Apoſtles. And if he were made *Biſhop* by them, for which we have the undoubted teſtimony of one that knew him; then he muſt be confeſſed to have been the *Angel* of that *Church*, whom S[t] *John* does ſo highly commend. And that he had Authority over many *Presbyters*, cannot be queſtioned; becauſe he collected the forementioned Epiſtles of *Ignatius*, and amongſt the reſt that to his own *Church* of *Smyrna*, and ſent them to the *Philippians*; in all which this power is moſt fully, and evidently aſſerted.

[a] *Iren.* Epiſt. ad *Florin.* apud *Euſeb.* lib. 5. c. 20. & in Epiſt. ad *Victor.* apud *Euſ.* lib. 5. c. 24.
[b] *Tertul. Hieron.*
[c] *Iren.* ubi ſupra.
[d] ὑπὸ Ἀποστόλων καθιστάθη εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν ἐν τῇ ἐν Σμύρνῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐπίσκοπος. Id adv. Hæreſ. lib. 3. c. 3.

I have made choice of theſe few Examples, out of many more, becauſe they ſeem to me to be very clear, and were all of them unqueſtionably within the times that the Apoſtles lived; and therefore it may appear from hence, that the *Epiſcopal* Government in the Church was a Conſtitution that was allowed, and eſtabliſhed by them.

But if this could not be proved, yet it muſt be confeſſed, that ſoon after it was univerſally received all over the Chriſtian World; for from about the middle of the ſecond Century, and ſo downwards, there is not an inſtance of any Church that had not

a *Biſhop* under whoſe Government it was. The Churches in the Roman Empire, and thoſe without it did moſt unanimouſly agree in this, that they all owned the *Epiſcopal* ſuperiority. And this is a very ſtrong argument, that it was a matter of Apoſtolical inſtitution. For it is not otherwiſe conceiveable how it could be brought into ſuch general uſe throughout the whole Catholick Church in ſo ſhort a time. If any ſhould think that it might be determined in a General Council ſoon after the deceaſe of the Apoſtles; this were a good teſtimony that it were ſtill Apoſtolical. For elſe it would never have been decreed by thoſe, ſome of which in all probability, muſt have ſeen, and converſed with ſome of the Apoſtles; and who were wont conſtantly to contend for ſuch things as they had heard from them, and to reject all other, as illegal innovations. But that there was never any ſuch Council ſeems to be beyond diſpute. For it could not be aſſembled in a time, when the Church was often in a ſtate of perſecution, and always looked upon with a jealous eye by the Civil power; which would not have ſuffered ſo great a number of Chriſtian Miniſters to meet together, without giving them ſome great diſturbance. Or if we ſhould ſuppoſe they might have been permitted to meet quietly; yet that they did ſo, there is not the leaſt mention or intimation in any Eccleſiaſtical Writer; and it cannot be conceived that they could have been ſilent in a matter ſo conſiderable as this, when they have punctually recorded ſo many of far leſs importance.

But if any can be inclined to believe that the *Epiſcopal* ſuperiority was a meer uſurpation of one *Presbyter* in a Dioceſs over the reſt, without the decree

decree of any Council; it is exceeding ſtrange that all the World ſhould be impoſed upon about the ſame time, in the ſame manner, without ever conſulting one with another. And who can imagine that the primitive *Biſhops*, who are acknowledged to have been ſuch pious, mortified, and ſelf-denying men, could be guilty of an ambition to advance themſelves above their brethren, contrary to the rule of the Apoſtles; eſpecially when they were like to get nothing by their aſpiring, but to be the firſt that ſhould burn at a ſtake in the market-place, or be torn in pieces in the Amphitheater? Or if we could ſuppoſe them to have been ſo wicked, and fooliſh too; it is not poſſible that they could have gained this new power, without ſome conſiderable oppoſition. Men are naturally very jealous of any incroachment that can be made upon their Rights. And the *Presbyters* of thoſe times may well be thought to have had as great a care of preſerving their Liberty, as we have now of ours. It is not therefore at all credible, that they ſhould, as it were, with one conſent, put their necks quietly under this new invented Yoke, and ſubmit without ſtruggling, to the uſurped power of one of their Equals; and that this defection ſhould be ſo univerſal, that the antient *Parity*, if there had been any ſuch, ſhould not keep its poſſeſſion in one Church in all *Chriſtendom*. And from hence it ſeems very plain that the *Epiſcopal* Government, that was exerciſed by the Apoſtles, and by others in their time, and received in all Churches, muſt be inſtituted by them; and they certainly did not act, in a Caſe of that high concernment to the perpetual peace and order of the Church, without the particular command of our bleſſed Lord, or the immediate inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt.

I have drawn together, in as clear and plain a method as I could, the ſubſtance of the Argument that may be made for the Power of the *Biſhop* over many *Presbyters*. And if to all this, and whatever elſe may be alledged, it ſhould be thought reply enough to
2 Theſ. 2. 7. ſay that the *Myſtery of iniquity began to work* in the Apoſtles days; and that therefore we are not to be obliged by any Examples though never ſo old. If this ſhould be pleaded, as I think it has been ſometimes; it may be anſwered thus: That *Epiſcopacy* may be proved upon good grounds out of the Scripture it ſelf; I am ſure far better than any other form of Government can pretend unto. But then being explained by the practice of that, and all following Ages, it will put the thing beyond all controverſy; if the ſacred Text alone ſhould not be clear enough to convince us of it. But if *the Myſtery of Iniquity* ſhould be ſtill inſiſted on; this can be no prejudice to our Cauſe; unleſs it can be proved that ſuch an *Epiſcopacy*, as we plead for, is that *Myſtery of Iniquity*, which is ſpoken of. That it is not, ſeems to me very evident. Becauſe I cannot think that the *Myſtery of Iniquity*, though it did *work* very early, ſhould ſo mightily prevail, that in a very ſhort time there ſhould not be any Church any where, that can be heard of, that was not Governed by the *Myſtery of Iniquity*; if *Epiſcopacy* be ſuppoſed to be ſo. *Clement*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarp* and other holy men and Martyrs, that had ſeen and converſed with ſome of the Apoſtles, were all *Biſhops*; and it would be hard, and uncharitable to think that ſuch as they, did not only not oppoſe, but that they were great managers, and promoters of the *Myſtery of Iniquity*. Nay I do not ſee, if it ſhould be thus, how *Timothy* and *Titus* can be wholly

wholly excuſed; for that they had an *Epiſcopal* power, will be readily confeſſed, and therefore they muſt be real *Biſhops*; and though the Apoſtle bid [a] *Timothy do the work of an Evangeliſt*; that was a thing very conſiſtent with the *Epiſcopal* Office, with which they were inveſted; as it is confirmed to us by the Antients, who had better opportunities than we, of knowing the truth, and who do account them the firſt [b] *Biſhops* of their reſpective Sees, the one of *Epheſus*, the other of *Crete*. So that if we will not involve theſe, and the other moſt holy men in one common guilt, *Epiſcopacy* cannot be that *Myſtery of Iniquity* that *began to work* ſo very ſoon.

[a] 2 Tim. 4. 5.

[b] *Euſeb.* lib. 3. c. 4.

It will be granted that the extent of the ſeveral *Biſhopricks* might be various, in ſome places of a wider, and in ſome of a narrower compaſs; and the number *of Presbyters* might be augmented, as the number of Converts did increaſe. But that one *Biſhop* ſhould have the Authority over many *Presbyters*, was a thing practiſed in the Apoſtolical times; and univerſally received in the Church: and there is not the leaſt mention to be found, that this was ever to ceaſe, and any other Government, or none, to be eſtabliſhed in its room. So that the *Church* of *England* is very excuſeable, if ſhe ſtill retain the primitive form; and it might be the higheſt preſumption, if no worſe, if ſhe ſhould attempt to make any ſubſtantial alteration in it.

SECT. III.

The next thing in the *Conſtitution* of the *Church* of *England*, which is diſliked by many, is the *Liturgy* or uſual *Form* of *Prayers* preſcribed by Authority, as the

the ordinary Office of our publick Devotions. But it cannot be eſteemed any blemiſh to the Engliſh Reformation, that the uſe of theſe has been injoyned, much leſs ſhould it be accounted as a thing unlawful. Before our Saviours appearance in the fleſh, there is no doubt but that ſet *Forms* of Prayer were lawfully uſed in the Jewiſh Church; ſome were appointed in the Law, and the whole book of Pſalms is nothing elſe but a Collection of ſuch, compoſed by *David*, and other holy men, upon ſeveral occaſions, and fitted for the publick ſervice of the Temple. Beſides theſe they have other *Forms*, ſome of which they pretend to have been made by *Eſdras*, and ſome they ſay, as old as *Moſes*. However that be; Prayer being none of thoſe Ceremonies that were to be aboliſhed, but a principal part of that natural worſhip, which all men owe to Almighty God, it may as well be offered up in a ſet *Form* now, as it was then. For that which was once lawful will always continue to be ſo; unleſs there be ſome command forbidding that to us, which was allowed unto them.

I do not find any ſuch prohibition as this in the Goſpel; but of ſo much we are ſure that there is a Prayer recommended unto us by our bleſſed Saviour; in which, it is true, all things are comprized, which it may be neceſſary at any time for a Chriſtian to ask. But yet we may not therefore think that this is not to be uſed by us as a *Form* of Prayer, becauſe it is the moſt excellent one that was ever made, and may be propoſed as the moſt admirable pattern by which we may direct our ſelves, and be ſtill furniſhed with ſuitable matter in all our addreſſes at the throne of Grace. This is no good reaſon why it ſhould be laid aſide, becauſe it is more exact, and perfect

than

than any other *Form*. And that our Saviour intended it ſhould be uſed as ſuch a one, it may appear; in that it conſiſts of ſeveral diſtinct Petitions; and moſt of theſe, as it has been obſerved by learned men, were ſuch as were then familiarly known amongſt the Jews, and are ſtill to be found in ſome of their devotional Books. And this Prayer was delivered to the Diſciples at two ſeveral times in the ſame Words; once in the Sermon upon the Mount, and again when they came unto him, and deſired him to *teach them to pray, as John had taught his Diſciples*. And this methinks might be enough to convince us that it was a *Form* which they were to uſe; but to put it out of all queſtion, our bleſſed Lord expreſly commands it: *After this manner*, or *thus therefore pray ye*. When he bids them *pray thus*, and then immediately ſets down a certain *Form*; who can doubt but that he plainly commands them to uſe that *Form*? But if it ſhould be poſſible for any one to conceive that when it is ſaid, *Pray thus* or *after this manner*, no more ſhould be implyed, but only that this is to be a pattern to make other prayers by, and that the following *Form* is not to be uſed to any other purpoſe than this: to avoid that, when the ſame Prayer is repeated by another Evangeliſt, upon a different occaſion, as if the Holy Ghoſt had deſigned to prevent this exception, it is not ſaid, *thus* or *after this manner*, but only *when ye pray, ſay, Our Father*, &c. A command ſo poſitive, and abſolute, that, if it may be evaded, I do not ſee but that all the precepts of the Goſpel may be cancelled upon the ſame grounds, that can be pretended for the diſſolving the obligation of this. If it ſhould be ſaid to have been no more than a temporary command laid upon the Diſciples at that time;

Mat. 6. 9. &c.

Luk. 11. 1. &c.

time; and that it was to indure no longer in force, but till they had attained some higher degrees of perfection, which they had not then arrived unto: It is manifest that this command has no such restriction annexed; and it is exceeding dangerous to make any, where the Scripture has expressed none. For suppose we should allow it but in this instance first, that the command were but temporary; men's extravagant fancies would presently extend it to as many more, as they pleased; and when they began to dislike any command, that seemed to contradict their fond opinions; they would immediately decry it as a thing wherein they were not concerned; that it was only intended as a help to Novices, and beginners, but did not oblige such great proficients, and persons of such mighty attainments, as all bold, and ignorant Enthusiasts are apt to imagine themselves to be. And thus by yielding it in one particular, we should lay the way open to the making void of the whole Gospel. And so it has been known by experience, that some by the natural improvement of this principle, have laid aside the use of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, and thought themselves above Ordinances, and despised them all, as *beggerly Elements*. But not to insist upon these inconveniences that would follow; it must be granted that our Saviour gave his Disciples a *Form*, and commanded them to use it; and what he commanded them, cannot be unlawful for us.

It is plain what opinion the Primitive Christians had of prescribed *Forms* of prayer; since they were very antiently received in the Church; probably as soon as Christianity it self. But this we are sure of, that [a] *Justin Martyr* towards the middle, and [b] *Tertullian* about the end of the second Century, do both

[a] *Just. Mart. Apol. 2.*
[b] *Tertul. Apologet.*

both of them, in their ſeveral Apologies, declare to the heathen Emperors, in divers particulars, what the Chriſtians of thoſe times were wont to pray for in their ſolemn aſſemblies. And where the matter of their Prayers was conſtantly the ſame, we have no reaſon to think but that the expreſſions might be ſo too. For why ſhould not a *Liturgy* be altogether as lawful, as a *Directory*? And if they were ordinarily limited as to the ſubject of their Prayers, why ſhould we believe that they were always bound to vary the Phraſe? If this will not amount to a proof; it is otherwiſe certain that the uſe of *Liturgies* has been very antient, and never, that I know of, excepted againſt till of late years. For the Lawfulneſs, and expediency of theſe, I ſhall only produce the teſtimony of Mr *Calvin*; a man for whom many of our diſſenting Brethren have juſtly entertained a very high eſteem: He in that known Epiſtle of his to the Duke of *Somerſet*, that was Protector here in the minority of King *Edward* the ſixth, delivers his judgement in this manner. *As for a Form of Prayers and Eccleſiaſtical Rites, I do highly approve that there ſhould be a certain one, from which it ſhould not be lawful for the Paſtor in his office to depart* He gives ſome reaſons for it afterwards. But by this it may be ſeen, that he did not only allow of it, as a thing that might be done without offence; but that he thought a ſet *Form* of publick Prayers ſo extreamly convenient, that it was very fit to have it ſtrictly injoyned; and that in ſuch a Caſe no Miniſter ſhould be permitted to uſe his own expreſſions, but keep cloſe to thoſe that ſhould be preſcribed. And the practice of all the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas has been agreeable to this opinion; for though ſome

Quod ad formulam precum, & rituum Eccleſiaſticorum, valde probo, ut illa certa extet à qua paſtoribus diſcedere in functione ſua non liceat. Calvin. Epiſt. ad Protect. Angliæ.

of them do ſometimes leave the Miniſter to his diſcretion to ſute his Prayer to the particular occaſion; yet they have ſome received *Forms* from which they do not ſuffer them to vary. And this indeed has been the cuſtom of all Chriſtendom, ſome very few places excepted, where another has been but lately introduced; and there being no preciſe time that can be aſſigned when this univerſal cuſtom firſt began, it is a very ſtrong preſumption that it may be a thing of Apoſtolical inſtitution. But whether that be ſo, or not, it has been a thing generally ſubmitted unto, and the Lawfulneſs of it was never controverted in former ages. For how could that be called in queſtion that might be eaſily juſtified by the example of our Saviour and his Diſciples, and the whole Chriſtian world? Or what could make that unlawful which had been approved by all theſe; but ſome ſubſequent Divine command expreſly forbidding it? And I think there is not ſuch a one to be found in all the holy Scripture.

If it ſhould be imagined that it may not be ſufficient, that it is not forbidden, but that to make a thing lawful in the worſhip of God, it is neceſſary that it ſhould be *poſitively commanded.* To this it may be anſwered; that it ſeems very clear that that which is no where forbidden, is not contrary to any Law, and therefore may be innocently done; for there can be no ſin, nor diſobedience where there is not the violation of ſome Law. And if we ſhould admit of the foregoing aſſertion, that a poſitive command is requiſite to make the thing Lawful, it would lead us into inextricable difficulties in this Caſe, and many others that may frequently occur. For if we may ſuppoſe that a *Form* of Prayer is unlawful,

lawful, becauſe it is not commanded; then a conceived or *Extempore* Prayer muſt be unlawful too, becauſe it is no more commanded than the other; and then all manner of Prayer would be equally unlawful; and this opinion inſtead of teaching us to Pray better, would abſolutely hinder us from Praying at all. But to put this matter out of doubt, our bleſſed Lord did command the uſe of a *Form* in one inſtance, at the leaſt, as has been ſhewed; and what he did but once command, can never be unlawful; unleſs he himſelf be pleaſed to make it ſo, by reverſing of his former command; which it does not appear that he ever did.

But it may poſſibly be thought by ſome, that a *Form* is unlawful, becauſe it was propheſied that God would *pour out the ſpirit of Grace, and of Supplications*. Zech. 12. 10. This prophecy might have ſome immediate reference to ſome extraordinary time, and might be fulfilled, as that of the Prophet *Joel* was, at the miraculous effuſion of the holy Ghoſt. But if it ſhould have a reſpect to all ages of Chriſtianity, as I will not deny; yet this *ſpirit of Supplications* may be very conſiſtent with praying by a *Form*. Becauſe it is given us to excite a greater fervency of devotion in us, and not to furniſh us with ſome pretty variety of words. And this may be not unfitly gathered from that paſſage of St *Paul*: *The ſpirit alſo helpeth our infirmities*: Rom. 8. 26. *for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought: but the ſpirit it ſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.* *Groanings* are inarticulate ſounds that do naturally ſignify the mind to be very deeply affected with ſomething, but they do not particularly declare what it is. And with theſe *the ſpirit helps our infirmities*; the aſſiſtances it gives

us are not such as a voluble tongue, and a great fluency of expressions; but certain inward affections, and emotions of the Soul, which it is not in the power of any tongue to express. And these sincere, fervent, and passionate desires may be raised in us by the *Spirit*, at the repeating of a known *Form*, as well as in the conceiving of the words of a Prayer.

But others may be ready to say, that those that have the *Gift of Prayer*, cannot be lawfully hindered of the exercise of such a *Gift*. If by the *Gift of Prayer* they understand no more than a faculty of expressing themselves freely upon all occasions they may have to pray; this is but what some may have a natural disposition unto, which may be much improved by art; and others may acquire the same by frequent use, and repeated acts; as all habits are generally produced. And no man will deny but that such a *Gift* may be restrained, as Authority thinks fit. But if by the *Gift of Prayer* they mean an extraordinary *Gift* of the Spirit, by which they have matter and expressions suggested unto them in the performance of that duty: It must first be made appear that they have indeed such a *Gift*, before the *Exercise* of it can be proved to be necessary. Or granting that they had this *Gift*; it is very evident that it might be restrained, for the preventing of disorder, and great inconveniencies in the Church, which might easily arise upon the unlimited *Exercise* of it. But the moderation of the *Church* of *England* may put an end to this dispute; for in Pulpit Prayer some liberty of expression has been generally taken, and seems to be allowed by the Canon; and will not be condemned in any, that know how to make a prudent and sober use of it. And since our pre-

1 Cor. 14. 32.

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ſcribed *Form* does not exclude all exerciſe of mens private *Gifts*, it is not reaſonable that the pretence of theſe *Gifts* ſhould deprive the Church of the great advantages of ſuch a *Form*.

What has been ſometimes confidently ſpoken, and as eaſily believed by credulous men, concerning *Praying with the Spirit*, I ſhall not mention; becauſe I think it will not now be inſiſted on; ſince it is manifeſt from the Text, that that phraſe imports no more but only Praying in an unknown tongue; which was a *Gift* that ſome had in thoſe firſt times, but cannot be applyed to our preſent controverſie. 1 Cor. 14. 15, 16.

I ſhall not weigh the conveniencies, and inconveniencies that may be imagined on either hand, though I ſuppoſe the advantage might lye on our ſide. Neither ſhall I examine the particular exceptions againſt the *Liturgy* eſtabliſhed amongſt us; I do not judge any of them material enough to make us break the peace of the Church for their ſakes; or to juſtifie our living in an open and conſtant contempt of Authority. But if any thing in it can be made appear to be repugnant to the word of God; I am very ſure that the wiſdom and piety of our Governours would never reſt till it were altered. And therefore having indeavoured to ſhew that ſet *Forms* of prayer may be lawfully uſed, I think the *Church* of *England* cannot be blamed for having injoyned the uſe of them. I ſhall add nothing farther here, but only deſire thoſe that do approve of the publick way of Worſhip now received amongſt us, that they would be ſerious and affectionate at their devotions; and very careful that they do not diſcredit their profeſſion by a looſe and unholy life. For thoſe that cannot yet

yet be perſwaded to join with us, I would take leave to adviſe them, that they would be very cautious how they cenſure, or deſpiſe thoſe that do. And for ſuch as do not altogether like it, but yet can allow themſelves to come ſometimes to our aſſemblies; I would earneſtly beg them to give God their hearts while they are there; and not ſit as if they were wholly unconcerned in the petitions that are putting up, much leſs to eſteem it a piece of Religion to behave themſelves irreverently during the time of divine Service.

SECT. IV.

The laſt thing in the *Church* of *England* which I ſhall mention is concerning *Eccleſiaſtical Laws*. By theſe we underſtand ſuch Rules and Conſtitutions as, not being contrary to the word of God, may be made for the better regulating of our external Worſhip, and the more orderly adminiſtration of Diſcipline, in matters not particularly determined in the Holy Scripture. And in places where the State is not Chriſtian, the Authority of the Church alone is ſufficient for the perfect eſtabliſhment of ſuch *Laws*; but where Chriſtianity is the received Religion of the Country, they are to be confirmed by the concurrence of the Civil Power, before they can have their full obligation. But it cannot well be queſtioned, but that there is a Power in the Church of making ſuch *Conſtitutions* as theſe. For the Church is a Society of Chriſtians; and therefore there muſt be ſome Authority in it to govern the ſeveral members of which it is compoſed; or elſe it would be immediately diſſolved, and brought to confuſion. And if there

there be ſuch an Authority, then it may command us in thoſe things that are not forbidden in the Written Word. For theſe are in themſelves indifferent, and may be injoined by Authority, and done by us without any Sin. For our Governors are no more forbidden to command them, than we are to do them; and if they do command them, it cannot be conceived that the command of a Lawful Power ſhould make that Unlawful which was not ſo before it was commanded.

The Church in all ages has aſſumed ſuch a Power, and was never that I remember, condemned for the exerciſe of it. In the famous Council held at *Jeruſalem*, where many of the Apoſtles were preſent, three of the four things which they decreed to be obſerved, were abſolutely indifferent, upon the Chriſtian Principles; and were nothing but prudential determinations, which the neceſſity of the times ſeemed to require, that they might not give too great a Scandal to the converted Jews, who ſtill retained a mighty veneration for their antient Law; nor hinder others of that Nation from imbracing the Faith, which was then newly publiſhed in the World. And if ſuch things were determined by the Apoſtles, their example may be thought a good plea to juſtifie thoſe that ſucceeded them in the Government of the Church, if they do no more, than what muſt be confeſſed to have been done by them, in the like caſes. Act. 15.

If any ſhould imagine that this power in things indifferent was peculiar unto them, and ſuch a one as was not to be derived upon their ſucceſſors: It is more, I believe, than can be proved, and we have this ſtrong preſumption againſt it. We know that there were

were others beſides them concerned in the determinations of that Council; St *James* that gave the definitive ſentence was none of the twelve; and
Act. 15. 2. *Paul* and *Barnabas* went *up to Jeruſalem unto the Apoſtles, and Elders about this queſtion*; and upon the
Act. 16. 4. reſult of the debate, they are called *The Decrees that were ordained of the Apoſtles and Elders.* The other *Elders* were to be conſulted and gave their voices in the matter of that controverſie, as well as the *Apoſtles*; ſo that theſe *Decrees* were not made by any Power that was proper, and perſonally inherent only in them; but by ſuch a one as was common to them with the other *Elders*; and therefore muſt be a part of their ordinary Juriſdiction, which was always to continue in the Church. They were indeed divinely inſpired; but they cannot be more ſafely followed, than in thoſe things, in which we know them to have been guided by the Holy Ghoſt.

Thus I am ſure the primitive Chriſtians always underſtood it. They called Councils, and made *Canons*, and had ſeveral uſages which they thought were to be obſerved, though they were not expreſly to be found in the Scripture. And when they injoined any thing of this nature, they did not look upon themſelves as guilty of uſurping a Power which God had not given them; and the reſt which had no ſuffrages in the Caſe, willingly obeyed and eſteemed themſelves bound to ſubmit to their injunctions. And when any controverſie happened to ariſe in ſuch matters, the queſtion was not whether the Church had any ſuch Authority to command; but whether the thing commanded were really indifferent or not. So it was in that famous diſpute about the time of keeping of *Eaſter*, which cauſed ſo much diſſention

tion in the first ages of Christianity; they did not contend against the *Power* of the *Church* to determine things indifferent; but both sides supposed themselves to be obliged by an Apostolical tradition, from which they thought it unlawful to depart. But where they judged the matter not to be contrary to some unalterable rule, they never opposed the commands of their Governours.

And the Protestant Churches have been all of the same opinion. They have all made some *Ecclesiastical Laws* for external order, and discipline, to which they require obedience from all of their own Communion; though these particular *Laws* are not expressed in the word of God, provided they be not repugnant unto it. And I think our dissenting Brethren themselves do all of them make use of such a *Power*; and indeed I do not see how it can be otherwise. For they will all severally acknowledge that there must be some *Power* amongst them to which every person that joins with their Assemblies ought to be subject, in all acts of Discipline; and these not being particularly determined in the Scriptures, must be determined by this *Power*, or else their Discipline cannot be put into practice. And if it may be thus determined once, it may be so again and again, and so as often as the like cases shall occur; and therefore it may be passed into a *Law* or *Rule* by which all matters of the same nature may be constantly decided for the future. And a collection of many such *Laws* would be so far equivalent to a Book of *Canons*, that it would contain divers Rules, and determinations of things which the Scripture had not particularly determined. If this be not granted that some such *Rules* may be esta-

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bliſhed, then all determinations not made in Scripture, which will be very many, muſt be left to the diſcretion of thoſe that have the Church Authority in their hands. And then the only difference, in this matter, betwixt them and us will be this; that we ſhall be governed by known and ſtanding *Laws*, and they by an uncertain Arbitrary *Power*. But ſince where any *Power* is allowed, ſome ſuch determinations muſt be made, in the one way or the other; it ſeems clear, that they which do blame the *Church* of *England* for admitting *Eccleſiaſtical Laws*, do not only condemn the Apoſtolical practice, and all Churches both antient and modern, but themſelves too.

Beſides, this *Power* we are now diſcourſing of, ſeems to have ſo clear a foundation in Scripture, that it cannot well be diſputed. The Apoſtle writing to the Hebrews exhorts them thus, *Obey them that have the*
Heb. 13. 17. *rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves.* If they were bound to *obey* and *ſubmit*, then certainly their Guides or Rulers had Authority to command. And if they might command in any thing, without doubt they might do it in things that are not forbidden in the Word of God. For theſe are not ſinful in themſelves, neither can they be made ſo, by being injoined by our Superiors, unleſs *obedience* muſt be eſteemed a Sin: But how can that be when we are here expreſly commanded to *obey*?

Another place there is which has been always urged to this purpoſe, and never yet I think received
1 Cor. 14. 40. any full and ſatisfactory anſwer. *Let all things be done decently and in order.* This is ſpoken upon occaſion of ſome irregular proceedings there had been in their Religious aſſemblies at *Corinth*; and it is laid down as a rule and expedient whereby they might avoid

avoid the like inconveniencies for the future. And that it was to be univerſally obliging, may appear from the grand reaſon of it, which we find mentioned a little before in the ſame chapter: [b] *God is not the Author of Confuſion but of Peace*; and that not in this, or the other particular Church; not for this or that time, but *in all Churches of the Saints*, in all places, and all ages of the World whatſoever. And then the precept it ſelf is to be extended to *all things*, whatever they be that are done in the Church, they muſt *be done decently and in order*. But it is not any where particularly expreſſed what is *orderly*, and *decent*; and if it may not now, or at any time be determined what is ſo; then this great Rule, in which *all Churches of the Saints* are concerned, would be wholly void, and of no effect, as to any uſe that could poſſibly be made of it. For though we ſhould acknowledge our ſelves obliged to do *all things decently and in order*, as we muſt; yet, if it ſhould be ſuppoſed that we may not preſume to determine of this, where the Scripture is ſilent, as here it is, we could never make any practical application of this Apoſtolical command to our own circumſtances; and ſo it would be all one unto us, as if we had never received it. But if it may be determined, then it muſt be done, either by publick Authority, or elſe according to every mans private judgement: If the former be granted, it is that which we contend for; that *Eccleſiaſtical Laws* may be made for the *decent* and *orderly* adminiſtration of all things in the Church: If the latter be allowed, then every one may determine for himſelf; and then conſidering the ſtrange variety of fancies that there are, eſpecially in matters of *decency*, we ſhould ſcarce find two it

[b] Ibid. v. 33.

may be in a thouſand that would be brought to agree in the ſame opinion; and by conſequence this general *Canon* of the Apoſtles, that was intended for the preſervation of good *order* among Chriſtians, would occaſion the moſt abſolute confuſion, that can be imagined. And for the avoiding of this, the determining what is *decent*, and *orderly*, muſt be left to our Governours, and it will be our duty to ſubmit, to what they ſhall injoin, in ſuch matters as theſe.

I ſhall name one paſſage more which may give ſome farther light and confirmation unto this; it is ſome chapters before where St *Paul* tells the *Corinthi-*
1 Cor. 11. 34. *ans* thus: *The reſt will I ſet in order when I come.* Here it is very obvious to be taken notice of, that there were ſome things to be regulated, which he ſhould leave undecided in this Epiſtle, but deſigned to take care about them at his being at *Corinth*, whither he intended to go the firſt convenient opportunity. Now theſe things 'tis very probable he did *ſet in order* afterwards, as he had promiſed to do; but we do not know, either what they were, or in what manner he diſpoſed them; but whatever they were, or however he determined them, thus much may be reaſonably gathered from it; that there may ſome things happen in the Church, which may lawfully be *ſet in order*, that are not expreſly determined in Scripture. For ſuch are thoſe here mentioned; which if they are any where determined, it muſt be in the ſecond Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*; but there it cannot be; for, beſides that it would be difficult to ſhew the place where it is done, that ſecond Epiſtle was written not long after the firſt, before the holy Pen-man of it, had gotten any leiſure to come amongſt them;

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but theſe caſes were reſerved till then, *when I come.* He forbore to write any thing of them, becauſe he intended to decide them, when he ſhould be perſonally preſent. But what he did then, we have nothing in the ſacred writings that acquaints us; and therefore it ſeems that ſome things may be determined, which are not entred into thoſe holy records.

This is a matter that has been always eſteemed ſo very plain, that it was never made a controveſie in former ages. But of late ſome have been exceeding jealous of it, becauſe, as they conceive, it ſeems to derogate from the great Proteſtant Doctrine of the *fulneſs* and *ſufficiency* of the Scriptures. If I could ſee any argument to perſwade me that it did ſo indeed, I ſhould be eaſily induced to reject it with as much indignation, as any of thoſe that do contend the moſt zealouſly againſt it. But we do readily acknowledge that *the Holy Scripture does contain all things neceſſary to Salvation*; that nothing is to be received as an article of Faith, that is not there clearly revealed; that nothing is to be impoſed as a duty in it ſelf acceptable unto God, which may not be manifeſtly proved from thence; that nothing is to be accounted an eſſential part of divine Worſhip, which is not there expreſly commanded. All that we attribute to our Governours is only a *Power* of determining about Indifferent things, which the word of God has not determined; and theſe we hold to have no other influence upon our future happineſs, or miſery, but only as we take obedience to ſuperiours to be our duty, and that we ought not obſtinately to oppoſe them in ſuch things, as we might have innocently done, if they had not been preſcribed by their Authority. Where the Scripture has forbid- Article 6.

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den, or commanded any thing, as it has whatever is neceſſary, there all the *Powers* upon earth are bound to ſubmit: Where the Scripture is ſilent, as it is in many matters of leſſer moment, there we are obliged to comply with the injunctions of a lawful *Power*. So that the ſufficiency of the Scripture may be very conſiſtent with the making of certain *Rules* for external *order* and *decency*.

But ſome have thought that if we ſhould allow any *Power* in the Church of impoſing ſuch things, we might by degrees have ſo many of them impoſed, as might be extreamly prejudicial to the ſtate of Religion; and that true Piety might be ſtifled, and buried, as it were, under the rubbiſh of a huge number of needleſs Ceremonies. And therefore they think that no ſuch *Power* ought to be admitted. But all that can be proved by this way of reaſoning will amount but to thus much; that ſuch a *Power* may poſſibly be abuſed; but it is not well argued from the abuſe of a *Power*, to the nullity of it. It has been always ſuppoſed that *Parliaments* had a *Power* of granting mony upon the Subject: But if any ſhould ſay, they cannot tell but that they may in time grant away their whole Eſtates, and therefore ſhould conceive that they could not grant any thing at all; ſuch a fond ſurmize would never be thought to have force enough to deprive them of their undoubted right. But in Church *Power*, as it is now bounded, there cannot be any juſt apprehenſions of ſuch an exceſs, as is pretended; for, beſides the reſtraint that common prudence muſt lay upon thoſe that have the management of it, it is limited on the one hand by the Scripture, that it cannot command any thing contrary unto that; and on the other

ther by the *Civil* Authority, whoſe approbation will be requiſite to give a validity to every *order* of the Church. And here then is a ſufficient check to prevent all exorbitancies that can be feared: If any thing be impoſed that is not confirmed by the *Civil Power*, it will not be thought obliging; if any thing be preſcribed that is contrary to Scripture, it muſt not be obeyed.

But if any *Conſtitutions* ſhould be made, which are only eſteemed *Burdenſome* by reaſon of their number, but are not otherwiſe unlawful; the fault will be in thoſe that impoſed them, and not in thoſe that ſubmit unto them. This is a thing that has been antiently complained of, but neither thoſe that made the complaint did ſeparate from the Church themſelves, nor perſwade others to do it, upon that account. For where the Impoſition is really *Burdenſome*, they are to be blamed that laid it on; but they that quietly bear it, will make their obedience the more acceptable, by adding patience and humility unto it. But this objection cannot be made in our particular Caſe; the injunctions of the Church of *England* are for their nature, innocent, and for their number, not many. And if they ſhould be judged to be unlawfully impoſed, becauſe they may be exceſſively multiplied; I think there is no occaſion now for ſuch a fear. However it will be time enough to apply the remedy, when we feel the diſtemper growing upon us; but it is always dangerous tampering with Phyſick, when we find our ſelves in perfect health. Every extravagant jealouſie of what may happen hereafter, ought not to ſhake what is well eſtabliſhed at the preſent. For if the contrary principle ſhould be allowed, it were impoſſible

poſſible for any Church or State in the World, ever to injoy one minutes repoſe. Our Church then is ſo far very blameleſs, that has admitted of a *Power* of making ſome *Laws* for the more orderly conduct of *Eccleſiaſtical* affairs, ſince it is a thing very reaſonable in it ſelf, very agreeable to the practice of all ages, and very conſonant to the rules of Scripture; from whoſe fulneſs it does not detract, neither can the poſſibility of its being abuſed make it wholly null.

I have hitherto indeavoured to lay together the ſumm of what I conceive may not be impertinently urged in defence of the *Church* of *England*, as to the three principal parts of her *Conſtitution*, *Epiſcopacy*, *Liturgy*, and *Eccleſiaſtical Laws*. All which as they are here eſtabliſhed, are agreeable to the practice of the beſt Churches, conſonant to the holy Scriptures, and may therefore be conformed unto with a good Conſcience.

SECT. V.

I ſhall now give ſome anſwer to ſeveral *objections* that have been made againſt her, eſpecially thoſe that I have obſerved to be the moſt popular, and which have raiſed the ſtrongeſt prejudice in the minds of ſuch as do not approve of our preſent eſtabliſhment. And theſe are of two ſorts, ſome that are made againſt the *Conſtitution* it ſelf, and others againſt the *Clergy* that conform unto it. I will a little examine a few of either kind.

And for thoſe of the firſt kind one is, that in our Church the *People* are denyed the liberty of *chooſing* their own *Paſtors*; to which ſome of our diſſenting

ſenting Brethren do conceive that they have always had an inherent Right. And beſides an example or two they think they can find in the Scripture, they ſuppoſe they have evident teſtimonies out of Antiquity to confirm this practice of popular Election. And it is true the *Peoples* approbation has been always thought ſo far neceſſary, that when hands were to be laid upon any, for their admiſſion into any ſacred function, if they knew them to be of a looſe and ſcandalous converſation, they might object it, and by that means hinder their promotion. And ſo much is ſtill retained amongſt us.

But farther, it will not be denyed but that in ſome places very antiently the *Biſhop* of the *Dioceſs* was *choſen* or nominated by the people of the City where he commonly reſided. But it does not appear that the ſeveral *Presbyters*, that might be appointed to certain Cures equivalent to our Parochial Churches, were ever wont to be *choſen* by the particular Congregations upon which they did attend. They were appointed by the Biſhop, whoſe office it was to take care of the whole Dioceſs, and to ſee that theſe *Presbyters* were not negligent in diſcharging the truſt that was repoſed in them. They were the *Dioceſan* Biſhops that were ſometimes *choſen* by the people; and they that inſiſt ſtiffly upon this priviledge, muſt acknowledge the Antiquity of theſe; or elſe they muſt declare themſelves to be very partial, whilſt they make uſe of ſo much of the teſtimony only, as they think makes for them, in the matter of *choice*, and reject or overlook the reſt, that is clearly againſt them in the queſtion about ſuch an *Epiſcopacy*. But however it cannot be proved that this cuſtom of the peoples *choice* was ever univerſally received;

and where it was, it often created ſuch diſturbances, that the ſecular Power was quickly forced to interpoſe, and nominate the Biſhop, for the preſervation of the publick Peace. And it was not long before this liberty of *choice* was wholly laid aſide by the *Imperial* and *Canon* Laws. Which is a clear proof that whatever it were, it was looked upon then, but as a voluntary conceſſion of their Governours, and not any inherent and unalterable Right. And therefore there can be no neceſſity, either that it ſhould be ſet up, where it never was, or reſtored again, where it has been diſcontinued for ſo many ages. And there is no doubt but that if it were generally practiſed in this nation, it would infalliby produce ſuch animoſities, and confuſion, that the *People* would ſoon grow weary of it themſelves, and deſire to be deveſted of ſuch an uneaſie Power, and that things might be let alone to run quietly in the old channel.

But becauſe thoſe that have been pleaſed to uſe this argument againſt our Church, are not at all to be prevailed upon by the moſt pregnant Examples of antient times in other caſes, they ought not, if they could, to make any advantage of them in this. Let us ſee then what grounds they have in the Scripture, for the Peoples *choice*, which is the only rule by which all ſides muſt confeſs themſelves to be equally bound. And here I cannot tell that there is any poſitive command that was ever urged, and I know but of two Examples that have been alledged for it; and I will briefly conſider them both.

Act. 6. 5. The one is in the Peoples *choice* of the ſeven Deacons. And ſuppoſing that they had an original Right of *chooſing* theſe; this will not amount to a ſuffici-

ſufficient proof that they had therefore a right of *chooſing* their *Paſtors*. The admitting them to name the perſons that were to ſerve in an inferiour Office, does not imply that they are therefore intruſted with the *choice* of thoſe that are to be advanced to a greater. And there was particular reaſon why the *Deacons* ſhould be *choſen* by them; they were to be the diſpenſers of the mony that was collected for the uſe of the poor; and the people might be incouraged to give more liberally, and all occaſion of murmuring for the future might be taken away, when the publick charity was diſtributed by perſons of known integrity, and ſuch as they themſelves had *choſen*. So that this inſtance does not ſeem fully to reach the purpoſe.

I ſhall therefore inquire into the other. It is where *Paul* and *Barnabas* are ſaid to have [a] *Ordained them Elders in every Church*. A man would wonder how the *Peoples* Power of *chooſing* their *Paſtors* ſhould ever be proved from this place. But it is attempted to be done by a Critical obſervation upon the Greek word, which is here rendered, *ordained*. For it did firſt ſignify a popular way of *election*, by majority of voices, which was diſcerned by lifting up of hands. And therefore ſome have imagined that theſe *Elders* were *ordained* in the Churches by their *election and ſuffrage*. But this is more than can be manifeſtly proved from the word. For though the original ſignification of it were what I mentioned but now, yet afterwards it began to be uſed promiſcuouſly, [b] for the appointing of any one to an office, whether it were by a popular *choice*, or by the Authority of a ſingle perſon. And therefore ſince this act of *Ordination*, or appointment to office,

[a] Χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς πρεσβυτέρους. Act. 14. 23.

[b] Vid. *Hammond.* in loc. not. b.

denoted by the Greek word here uſed, is many times applyed to the Authoritative proceedings of particular men, without any regard to the *ſuffrages* of the *People*; and ſince it is here attributed to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and not to the *multitude* of believers; it does not appear from this place, that the whole Community had, or rather it is evident that they had not any hand in the appointment of theſe *Elders*. For I do not believe that one paſſage can be produced out of any good Author, where the Magiſtrate or other Superiour ſaid Χειροτονεῖν, or thus to *ordain*, when the *choice* or appointment of the Officer was in the People, and therefore when *Paul* and *Barnabas* are here ſaid to have *ordained*, if we ſhould ſuppoſe that the voices of the multitude are implyed in this expreſſion, it would be an acception of the word for which we have not any example.

But if we ſhould yield that by an unheard of ſtraining of the Phraſe here, we might poſſibly find ſome little colour for the *Peoples choice* of their *Paſtors*; it could yet be no more than a favourable conceſſion made unto them upon that occaſion. For that the *ſuffrages* of the *multitude* were not always neceſſary to the conſtituting of *Elders*, ſeems very plain from thoſe words of St *Paul*: *For this cauſe left I thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldeſt ſet in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every City, as I had appointed thee.* Here *Titus* is intruſted with a power of *ordaining Elders*, and other matters relating to the better regulation of Church affairs. And he was not *choſen* to this Office by the *people*, but *appointed* unto it by St *Paul*; and when he had thus received this Authority from him, we cannot think that he was to depend upon the People

Tit. 1. 5.

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in the exerciſe of it. For he alone is commiſſioned to *ordain Elders*, without any mention of the *ſuffrages* of the *multitude*. And there cannot be the leaſt ſhadow of a conjecture framed to the contrary, from the nice conſideration of the word: For that which is here tranſlated, [a] *Ordain*, is not the ſame with that which is uſed in the other place; for it ſignifies plainly to *conſtitute*, *place*, or *ſet up*, without any intimation of lifting up of hands, or any way of *popular Election* whatſoever. So that we have neither precept not Example in the Scripture, for the Peoples right to the *choice* of their *Paſtors*.

[a] χαθιστησι

But if it ſhould be ſtill urged againſt us, that the *Church* of *England* is to be condemned for want of ſuch a free *choice*, as may be always pretended, but, I believe, will never be proved neceſſary; then to this we do reply, that this freedom of *choice* is in ſome ſort retained in our Church; for all the Miniſters in it are appointed according to the known Laws of this Land; and to theſe every one of us, by our repreſentatives, have at leaſt *virtually* given our conſent; and a *virtual conſent* in this caſe, is allowed to be ſufficient, by ſome of the ableſt Patrons of the *People's* right of *Election*.

SECT. VI.

But it is objected farther that the *want of Diſcipline* in our *parochial* Churches is a very great and unſufferable defect. But there is no cauſe given for ſuch an exception; for every Miniſter has the approbation of thoſe that are to be admitted, and is impowered to reject ſcandalous offenders from the Holy Communion. And theſe are certainly parts of

of *Diſcipline*, which, with the other acts of the Miniſterial office, ſhew that there is ſome order and Government in our *parochial* Aſſemblies. If this ſhould not be eſteemed enough, becauſe in them we cannot inflict the higheſt kind of Eccleſiaſtical cenſures; we do not conceive that there is any neceſſity that ſuch a power ſhould be granted unto them, ſince it is abundantly ſupplyed by the Authority of the *Dioceſan*, which reaches every particular Church in the whole Juriſdiction. And it would be as unreaſonable to think that there is no *Diſcipline* in a *Pariſh*, becauſe there are ſome acts of it which cannot be there performed; as it would be for the inhabitants of a village, or hamlet to complain, that they were under no Government, becauſe they had not the Power of life and death amongſt themſelves; for the defects of the one are made up by the power of the *Dioceſan* Church, and thoſe of the other by that of the Commonwealth, whereof they are reſpective parts. I do not find that our Saviour or his Apoſtles have made it neceſſary that all offences ſhould be finally cenſured by the ſole Power of that Congregation where they were committed. This were to ſet up an uncontroulable Authority in every private Aſſembly; and every twenty or thirty men, or it may be fewer, that ſhould be pleaſed to enter into Covenant together, and call themſelves a Church, (as ſome contend they may) would be *ipſo facto* inveſted with a Power of determining all matters of Eccleſiaſtical cognizance without Appeal; which is more than moſt Papiſts will allow to the *Biſhop* of *Rome*. What foundation there is for the erecting ſuch a boundleſs power I cannot tell; neither can I gueſs what good uſe is ever like

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to be made of it, if it ſhould be granted; but this I know, that the *Church* of *England*, which is a ſociety of Chriſtians imbodied under certain Laws and Governours, cannot be accuſed for *want of Diſcipline*, if ſhe does not permit the full exerciſe of it in our *parochial* Churches. For in all Communities every member is influenced and directed by the good Conſtitution of the whole Body; and what cannot be legally judged in a lower, may be reſerved for the deciſion of a ſuperiour Court.

SECT. VII.

But ſome are ſtill diſſatisfied with the *Church* of *England*, becauſe they imagine it is not a *pure* Church; and if they have an opportunity of joining with another which they can ſuppoſe to be *purer*, they think themſelves obliged to do it. For the reſolution of this doubt theſe few things may be conſidered: What it is that makes a *pure* Church? Whether the *Church* of *England* be ſuch a one? Whether we are always bound to join with that Church which we conceive to be the moſt *pure*?

Now that Church queſtionleſs may be ſaid to be *pure*, whoſe doctrine is conſonant to the word of God, where the Sacraments are duly adminiſtred, where all the fundamental Articles of our Faith are publickly imbraced, where men are not required to profeſs, or to do any thing that is contrary to the Rule of the Holy Goſpel: Such a Church cannot be denyed to be *Pure*. For here is not the mixture of any unclean thing, that can taint it with the leaſt imaginable *impurity*, or impreſs any blot or ſtain upon it.

Then that the *Church* of *England* is thus *pure*, it will not be difficult to ſhew before any impartial

Judge.

Judge. For what Doctrine does ſhe teach that is not to be found in the Holy Scriptures? What Sacrament does ſhe deprive the people of, either in the whole, or in part? What Article of our Belief is it that ſhe rejects? What is it that is repugnant to the Laws of Chriſt, which ſhe obliges us either to believe or practiſe? Does ſhe tell us that the Elements in the Holy Euchariſt are tranſubſtantiated by a few Syllables pronounced by him that Officiates? Does ſhe teach us to adore Saints, and Images, and to pray for the Dead? Does ſhe cheat the people with forged Miracles, and impoſe upon their credulity with foppiſh Legends? Does ſhe kindle an imaginary Purgatory fire in the other world, that ſhe may ſet up a thriving trade for Indulgences in this? Can ſhe be accuſed of theſe corruptions, or a hundred more that might be named? Is not her Doctrine confeſſed to be *pure?* And is not her Diſcipline ſuch at leaſt, as is not forbidden? And if ſhe be found in both theſe, I do not diſcern from what other fountains any *Impurity* can be derived upon Her. And for what has been commonly excepted concerning the uſe of ſome external and Indifferent things, ſhe cannot poſſibly contract any thing of pollution from theſe; for if they *do not defile a man*, much leſs will they be able to corrupt a Church.

Mat. 15. 20.

But though the *Church* of *England* ſhould be proved and granted to be a *pure* Church, yet we are ſtill to inquire, Whether if we can find ſome other which we eſteem to be more *pure*, we are not bound to join with that? And to this it may be anſwered; that when a Church is ſo far *pure* that it does not exact the belief, or exerciſe of any thing that

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is unlawful, it is certain that we may ſafely join with ſuch a Church. And if we were ever admitted members of it; or if we ſhould be bound by the Laws of the Land, where we are ſubjects, to communicate with it, we muſt not ſeparate from it upon any pretence of greater *purity*. For where all things neceſſary to Salvation are taught, and where nothing contrary to the word is injoyned, that Church is full as *pure*, as any other can be ſuppoſed to be. For the Scriptures muſt be acknowledged to be the only rule of *purity*; and then where there is nothing contrary unto them, there is not any thing that ought to be accounted *impure*. If we ſhould forſake this, and judge of theſe things by other meaſures, we muſt leave them to be determined by every man's particular Fancy. And then one would preſently imagine this to be the *pureſt* Church, and another that; and as ſoon as any one began to have the leaſt diſlike of any thing in his own Church, he would fall immediately to looking about for one that was *purer*, and if he chanced to find ſuch a one, it might not be very long before he might be offended with that too, and make inquiry after another, and ſo this principle inſtead of bringing him into the *pureſt* Church, might at length draw him from the Communion of all the Churches in the World. There have been inſtances of this; but if there were none, it is very apparent whither this opinion may lead us; and we ſhould be very cautious how we entertain it, ſince it tends manifeſtly to the diſſolution of all Church Society, and the endleſs rending, and dividing of the Body of Chriſt. And to avoid being guilty of this, we muſt fix our ſelves upon ſome firm foundation; which in this caſe,

can be no other than what has been already intimated; that we eſteem nothing *impure*, but what God has declared to be ſo. If any Church impoſe any thing upon us which is contrary to the word of God, as that of *Rome* does, we muſt not join with it; but if a Church require nothing repugnant unto that, as ours of *England* does not, we ought not to ſeparate from it, though we ſhould think that we had diſcovered another that was more *pure*. For thoſe that are not ſatisfied with that degree of *Purity* in a Church Conſtitution which is to be found in ours, will ſcarce ever be contented with any. If that be not *pure* enough for them, where no unlawful thing is commanded, I do not know where they will find one that is. And if they ſhould go on at ſuch a rate, they may *Purify* a Church till they have Reformed it to nothing. Like an unskilful Chymiſt that will rectifie and refine good Spirits ſo long, till he have made them ſo very volatile, and exalted them to that degree, that they evaporate and vaniſh into air. If we cannot tell where we may ſafely ſtop, we may loſe the very ſubſtance and being of a Church, when we think we are only purging away the dregs. But if it ſhould ſtill be inſiſted on, that we ought to withdraw from the Communion of a leſs *pure* Church, where a *purer* may be had; then if there ſhould be any Church that holds it unlawful to ſubmit to Authority in matters indifferent, we are obliged by this Rule to forſake it and come over to the Church of *England*; becauſe this Doctrine is a greater *Impurity* than any that can be juſtly charged upon Her.

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SECT. VIII.

Another exception that lyes againſt our preſent eſtabliſhment is the admiſſion of *Lay-Chancellours* and *Officials* to any Juriſdiction in Eccleſiaſtical concerns. This is a thing that has been often objected, not only by thoſe that diſſent from our Church, but by ſome that are otherwiſe no enemies unto it. As far as I underſtand the Caſe, I ſhall briefly lay down what I judge may be reaſonably pleaded in excuſe of this practice. It ought therefore to be conſidered that as ſoon as ſoveraign Princes had imbraced the Chriſtian Religion, out of the great reſpect which they bore to Churchmen, they beſtowed upon them many priviledges, and amongſt the reſt, they were pleaſed to intruſt them with a power of judging in divers matters, which before did not properly belong to their cognizance. In this Kingdom, Matrimonial and Teſtamentary Cauſes eſpecially have been always triable in the Spiritual Court. And for the better diſpatch of theſe affairs, which by the favour of the Prince were committed unto them, the Biſhops were allowed to make choice of certain perſons skilful in thoſe Laws, to be their aſſiſtants in their Judiciary proceedings; and theſe were antiently called *Eccleſiæcdici*, and are thought to have been the ſame with our *Chancellours*. Now theſe *Chancellours* whatever they act, do all by vertue of an Authority delegated to them by the Biſhop; and they have not a power of doing any Act that is purely Spiritual; for upon hearing of the Cauſe, they only give their judgement when an offender ought to be cenſured according to Law, but the ſentence is

[a] Cod. Juſtin. lib. 1. Tit. 3. Omnem.

always pronounced by an Eccleſiaſtical perſon. So that I do not underſtand why it ſhould be neceſſary to make ſo great an alteration in the frame of our antient Conſtitution, as the removal of theſe would occaſion, ſince they cannot be looked upon as Invaders but friendly Aſſiſtants of the Spiritual Power. That I may not mention what a prejudice it might be to the publick, to give any diſcouragement to the excellent Profeſſion of the Civil Law, whereof there is ſuch an abſolute neceſſity in Maritime cauſes, Treaties of commerce, and other negotiations with foreign Princes.

SECT. IX.

I come now to that which I think is the moſt popular and taking objection that is wont to be made againſt our Church; and that is the permitting one perſon to injoy a *plurality of Benefices*. It is a thing which many do eſteem a very great abuſe, and that which ought not by any means to be indured. And I confeſs I am not very forward to attempt the making any Apology for it; I would not zealouſly defend a cuſtome, where the contrary practice ſeems to have in it ſo much Piety, and ſelf-denyal, and care for the Souls of men. But becauſe I believe that it was not retained among us but upon ſome good and weighty conſiderations, I ſhall briefly offer what I conceive, may be ſaid in defence of it; which I ſhall do by removing the main objections that are ordinarily made againſt it. It is argued therefore, that for any man to have more *Benefices* than one is a thing *unlawful* in it ſelf; that it is a particular *wrong* to him that ſupplys the Cure; and that there are other great *inconveniences* that

that do follow upon it. The firſt of theſe is the principal objection, and if there may be any reaſonable anſwer made unto that, there will be no great difficulty in the other two.

And I do not ſee how it can be proved abſolutely *unlawful* that one man ſhould be allowed to hold a *plurality of Benefices*. The care of Souls is indeed a very great charge; and ſuch a one as ought not to be lightly undertaken; it requires our moſt ſerious and deliberate thoughts, our firmeſt reſolutions, and our moſt earneſt prayers for the divine aſſiſtance, before we go about it; and when we are in it, the continuance of the ſame will be ſtill neceſſary; to which we muſt then add a diligent application of our minds to the actual Execution of the miniſterial office. And this muſt not be denyed to be a matter of the higheſt conſequence, and concernment; but yet I do not find in the Scripture that the whole care of every man that enters into the Miniſtery is of neceſſity to be limited and bound down to one particular Congregation. I need not inquire how long it was before every Dioceſs began to be divided into diſtinct Pariſhes; but it is certain that in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity things were not preſently brought to ſuch a ſettlement. But the Biſhops with their Councils of Presbyters, commonly reſiding in the Cities, ſent ſome of their number occaſionally into the Countries round about, for the farther inſtruction and confirmation of thoſe that did already believe, and to endeavour the converſion of the reſt that were yet in the State of Paganiſm and Infidelity. Now while the condition of the Church was ſuch, it is not unlikely but that the ſame Presbyter might at divers times perform the offices of his function in

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everal Chriſtian aſſemblies, and have the charge of them committed unto him. There is nothing in this repugnant to any Rule that I know of; but this is undenyable that before there were any Pariſhes formed, there could not be any fixed Parochial Cures. Theſe were invented by the prudence of after times, and are of ſingular uſe for the more orderly Government of the Church. But as theſe diſtributions were at firſt made and confirmed by the Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Laws, ſo the manner how the care of them ſhould be managed may be determined by the ſame. And ſeeing that our Laws do allow ſome perſons, duly qualified, to undertake *two* of theſe *Cures*, in one of which he is obliged ordinarily to reſide, and to ſettle an able Curate in the other, and to preach there himſelf thirteen times every year; and ſeeing that all the Spiritual neceſſities of the Church may be thus provided for, in as good a manner as they can be any other way; I cannot tell that there is any thing in the word of God that will condemn ſuch a practice. Neither do I underſtand why it may not be as well permitted, as one Church where there is a Chappel of eaſe, or, it may be, more annexed unto it.

And if it be not otherwiſe *unlawful*, there cannot be any *wrong* or *injuſtice* done by it unto him that ſupplies the Cure. It is very ſpeciouſly urged that he that does the work, ought of right to have the wages; and that therefore he that undertakes and diſcharges the office, has a juſt title to all the *Tythes*, and emoluments of the whole *Benefice*. And it is ſo far true indeed that he may lay his claim to a competent ſalary, ſuch a one as may be a comfortable ſubſiſtance for him; and to make too ſtrait

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an allowance in ſuch a Caſe, is one of the worſt kinds of oppreſſion; but when that is done, the legal Incumbent may, without any *injuſtice*, retain the overplus of the profits for his own uſe. For the Goſpel requires no more but in the general that every Miniſter ſhould have a maintenance; but it does not allot every man his certain proportion, that is left to be determined either by private agreement, or by the municipal Laws of the Land. And if theſe Laws may, without any injury, aſſign the far greater part of the *Tythes* to a ſecular perſon, that takes no care at all of the Cure, as the caſe is in moſt Impropriations; then they may, on the ſame terms confer them upon a Churchman: And therefore much more if he ſhall be obliged to ſee the Cure conſtantly ſupplyed, and ſometimes perſonally to attend it himſelf.

But though it ſhould be neither *unlawful* nor *injurious*, yet it may be conceived that there are ſuch great *Inconveniences* that will follow upon the intruſting of the ſame man with more *Benefices* than one, that it ought not to be ſuffered in the Church. The only *Inconvenience* here, that I can call to mind, is what has been often alledged, that upon this occaſion many Cures come to be exceedingly neglected, and none, or elſe but weak, or ſcandalous perſons put into them. But this I know is carefully provided againſt in many places; and where it is not, it is a great fault, and ought to be puniſhed by publick Authority. But the original of this miſcarriage lyes in the admiſſion of ſome unqualified perſons into holy Orders, which I hope the conſcientious care of our Governours has, and will be very diligent to prevent. But where any ſuch have crept in unawares,

they

they ought to be discovered, and censured, as they deserve. Till then, it is most likely that they may be soonest reformed, when they are under the inspection of a more prudent and sober man. For he that will not be orderly in anothers Cure, will be apt to give more offence in one of his own. He that will not be induced to behave himself soberly and diligently in a place that he holds at discretion, and from whence he may be so easily removed; would be more regardless of his actions, if he should be legally possessed of a *Benefice* in his own right, out of which he could not be ejected, but with far greater difficulty. So that this inconvenience will be more probably avoided where *pluralities* are allowed, than where they are not.

Nay the permitting of this may have other considerable advantages in it. For by this means many of the younger sort, after their Ordination, being for a while under the direction of some graver Divine, might be trained up and exercised, and in many respects better fitted for the full discharge of a parochial Cure, than they could be, if they should come into it, before they had gained some competent experience. And on the other side it might be an incouragement to men of greater industry, and deserts, to see themselves capable of some present reward by such an addition to their ordinary maintenance. And this seems to have been the prime intention of the Law in the concession of this favour; and thus it is often applyed; and where it happens to be otherwise, it is an errour that must not be charged upon the Constitution. But if there be any that receive the benefit of it, who instead of being quickened by it to more diligence, do make it an occasion of idleness

neſs and ſloth, and groſly neglect both, or either of their *Cures*; it is a direct contradiction of the deſign of this Indulgence, and they are a ſort of Spiritual Droans, that are anſwerable for it both to God and men. But if a due regard be had to the firſt intent of it, it ſeems plain to me, that the admitting a *plurality of Benefices*, would not prove any inconvenience, but ſeveral ways of great advantage to the Church.

SECT. X.

And thus I have conſidered ſome of the principal *objections* that are commonly made againſt the *Conſtitution* of the *Church* of *England*. I ſhall proceed now to the examination of thoſe that are levelled at the *Clergy* that conform to that *Conſtitution*. For though it be highly unjuſt to make the *Conſtitution* reſponſible for the miſcarriages of all that are in it, ſince they cannot be wholly prevented, and that the beſt regulated Societies in the world have been always ſubject to ſome perſonal defects; yet it is very obſervable that many of thoſe that diſſent from us have been very ready to entertain an ill opinion of their *Conforming* brethren; over credulous to believe, and ſomething too forward to propagate any ſcandalous rumors that have been ſpread abroad to their diſadvantage. Whether it be that the want of better arguments is to be ſupplyed by a ſtrong prejudice, induſtriouſly raiſed, and ſtudiouſly fomented; or that they think a charitable judgement ill beſtowed upon thoſe that are not in all things of their own perſwaſion; or whatever the cauſe of it may be, the effect is certainly apparent enough. Of late eſpecially the lives and behaviour of the *Conformiſts* have been narrowly

ſcanned; as if there were now ſome more than ordinary occaſion of rendring them odious and contemptible in the eyes of the people. I will not inquire what ſhould be the deſign of ſome buſie men in ſtriving to undermine the credit of the *Clergy* at this time: It may be they would have their reputation leſſened, becauſe they cannot be induced to blow the coals for the heating thoſe Irons, which ſome cunning ingineers may have in the fire. But whatever the reaſon of it is, this is notorious that nothing has been omitted that might make for their diſparagement; they have been charged with the blackeſt crimes, and very often without any diſtinction of the innocent from the guilty. They are vulgarly accuſed of *Ignorance*, *Debauchery*, *Pride*, *Covetouſneſs*, of being *Popiſhlye affected*, of a *Love to Arbitrary Government*, and of *Medling* with *State affairs*. Theſe are the things they are commonly taxed with; moſt of them qualities very bad in themſelves, ſome of them particularly aggravated by our preſent circumſtances, others very improper for men of their function, and all exactly fitted to expoſe them to the ſcorn and diſpleaſure of the multitude. They are indeed heavy accuſations, but ſuch as I am confident cannot be proved. I do not ſay that there are not any of the *conforming Clergy* that may not be ſomething obnoxious in ſome of theſe reſpects: never any Church was ſo happy, as to have all its *Miniſters* wholly unexceptionable. But for the generality of ours, I think they are moſt unjuſtly traduced; as may be made evident, if we ſhall examine the particulars of the Charge.

SECT. XI.

The firſt thing that is objected againſt them is the *Ignorance*

Ignorance and unskilfulneſs of many of them in the matters of their own Profeſſion. It is true that thoſe that are acted by Enthuſiaſtical principles are exceeding prone to deſpiſe us for this; when they have raiſed their Fancies with ſtrange dreams of rare Diſcoveries, they are apt to look down upon others with ſomething of contempt. The meaneſt and moſt illiterate Artiſan, that has but a tincture of this conceit, will be ready to pity the blindneſs of the moſt learned adverſary, that oppoſes his follies; and think himſelf an overmatch for the beſt ſtudied, and moſt judicious Divine. But excepting theſe, that are not to be regarded, the Engliſh *Clergy* have been always very well eſteemed for their abilities, by all prudent and ſober perſons both at home and abroad. And if I am not very much misinformed, there is not a Church beyond the Seas at this time, that can pretend to have a more learned, and accompliſhed Miniſtry than Ours is. And if we might have leave to make inquiry what was the ſtate of theſe affairs before his Majeſties happy Reſtauration (when we were told that all abuſes ſhould be reformed) I verily believe that a curious man might have obſerved as much *Ignorance* in thoſe days, as he will be able to diſcover in theſe. But not to look back on what is paſt: no unbiaſſed Judge will ever think that the diſſenting *Miniſters* at the preſent, do generally excel the Conforming *Clergy* in any point of uſeful Learning. It will be a very hard matter to ſhew what it is wherein the *Conformiſts* have not acquitted themſelves as well as their Brethren. They have been as ſucceſsful in the ſtudy of thoſe Languages and arts, that do prepare men for the knowledge of greater things; They have been no leſs diligent and ſerious in ſearching and in-

deavouring to underſtand and explain the Scriptures; They have applyed themſelves as carefully to the reading both of antient, and modern Eccleſiaſtical Writers, and taken as impartial a view of the ſtate of the Church in all ages; They have uſed as much induſtry in examining all the material controverſies in Divinity, and their ſermons have been as practical, and directed as much to the profit and edification of their Hearers. It muſt needs be granted that they have been at leaſt as eminent as their *Non-Conforming* Brethren, in all the ſeveral parts of Learning.

There are indeed many amongſt them who in reſpect of the greater attainments of others, may be ſaid to be comparatively *Ignorant*, But I think very few that are not tolerably qualified for the diſcharge of their Office. For where there is a charitable, meek and humble diſpoſition, a lower degree of knowledge may be improved to better purpoſe, than the moſt profound and deepeſt skill, when it is attended with a ſupercilious Pride, and a certain ſcornful haughtineſs of mind. It were heartily to be wiſhed, and publick care ought to be taken about it, that all that enter into holy Orders might be every way ſufficiently fitted for that weighty imployment they undertake; but it cannot be expected that they ſhould be equally furniſhed with abilities for ſuch a work; and where any not ſo well accompliſhed, as were to be deſired, ſhall happen to have a Cure committed unto him, he cannot have altogether ſo bad an influence in the *Church* of *England*, as in ſome other Conſtitutions. Becauſe here the inſtruction of the people in the fundamentals of Religion is otherwiſe provided for, and the whole performance

formance of Divine Service is not left to the diſcretion of the Miniſter. So that his defects, whatever they are, may be better ſupplyed this way, than can poſſibly be done, where all depends only upon his perſonal and preſent capacity.

But this exception that is taken at our *Ignorance* is uſually moſt inſiſted on by thoſe that have the leaſt reaſon to reproach us with it; and I eſteem it rather to be the effect of fondneſs and partiality to their own men, than a juſt and equitable cenſure of Ours. For from whence they may receive their information I cannot tell; but thoſe that attend more conſtantly at our publick aſſemblies can aſſure them, that they ſhall not often hear ſo mean a Sermon there, from which, by the grace of God, they may not reap ſome Spiritual advantage; if they come rightly diſpoſed, ready to be informed or reminded of their Duty; and not, as the faſhion of too many is, meerly to ſit as judges, while they are at Church, and give their opinion of the Preacher when they come home. But this is but a ſlight and cavilling objection, and, if we pleaſed, might be eaſily retorted upon many of them that are the forwardeſt to make it.

SECT. XII.

The next is far more conſiderable; for we are told that great numbers of our *Clergy* are men of *debauched* and *ſcandalous* lives, which is a thing that the very meaneſt may freely judge of, and if true, is indeed a very great and real offence. But before I endeavour to give any anſwer to this, I muſt needs take notice of a piece of injuſtice which, if I miſtake

ſtake not, has been pretty common. Many there are that will be exceeding ſevere in cenſuring the leaſt miſcarriages of the *Clergy*, which can overlook groſſer faults in other men. Nay ſome I have heard of that can indulge themſelves in riot and intemperance, who will pretend to be mightily ſcandalized, if they hear of a *Miniſter* that may poſſibly be taxed with the like exceſs. They ſeem to imagine that a looſe and careleſs way of living is the unqueſtionable right of the Lay-man, and if any of us preſume to tread in their ſteps, they grow very angry, as if we invaded their Property, and intended to ſhare with them in their patrimonial eſtate. They talk as if they believed it lawful for others to behave themſelves as they pleaſed, and that the ſobriety of the *Clergy* were to make an attonement for the ſins and licentiouſneſs of all the People. They tell us indeed very truly,
1 Pet. 5. 3. that we are to be *Examples to the flock*; but then
1 Cor. 11. 1. they do not remember that *they are to be followers of us, as we are of Chriſt*. Except the faithful diſcharge of their particular calling, which is required of others too in their ſeveral ſtations, I cannot tell of any thing that *Miniſters* are bound to, which is not the duty of every other private Chriſtian. It is true that their faults do admit of very great aggravations; but that does only inhance the degree, not alter the nature of the guilt. And theſe aggravations, it may be, are no greater in them, than they would be in others of eminent place and quality, either Civil or Military, whoſe vitious lives may have as bad an influence upon the world as theirs. But of this there can be no doubt, that they that do paſs ſuch a rigorous ſentence upon their failings, and can ſo eaſily excuſe themſelves and others for the ſame, or

more

more heynous crimes, do make it appear, that they are no great enemies to the sin, but that they are something displeased at the men.

Gregory Nazianzen reflecting sadly upon the unhappy dissentions of those times, and the want of charity, contempt of the Ministry, and the bold pretences to knowledge, and the Spirit that arose amongst them, complains that things were brought to that pass [a] *that all their Piety consisted in nothing else but in condemning the Impiety of others.* He acquaints us farther, [b] *that they were very busie in hunting after one anothers faults, not to lament, but to upbraid them, not to heal, but to hurt, and that they might salve their own credit by wounding their neighbours;* [c] *and that it was not the Life, but the being friends or enemies that gave men the character of good or bad.* These and more such observations were made by that excellent person upon the Christians that were then of different perswasions; and where the like prejudice is conceived, it may incline men to the like censoriousness and partiality in any age. We are often told of the *debauchery* of *Conformists*; and it is our great grief that there should be any just cause for such an accusation, and I hope that those that make the complaint will join their hearty endeavours to take away the occasion of it. But let them make a diligent inquiry whether they may not have some such among themselves, and whether there were none of that stamp remaining, after the Church had been purged of so many *Centuries* of pretended *scandalous Ministers*? I will not be curious in making such a search; we need not recriminate for the defence of a good Cause; we have been always backward to do this, after many provocations given, and I wish that our Brethren would

[a] Πάντες δὲ ἐσμὲν εὐσεβεῖς, ἐξ ἑνὸς μόνου, τοῦ καταγινώσκειν ἄλλων ἀσέβειαν. Greg. Nazian. Orat. 1.

[b] θηρῶμεν δὲ τὰς ἀλλήλων ἁμαρτίας, οὐχ ἵνα θρηνήσωμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ὄνει δίσωμεν. &c. Ibid.

[c] Κακοὺς δὲ καὶ ἀγαθοὺς, οὐχ ὁ τρόπος, ἀλλ' ἡ διάστασις καὶ ἡ φιλία χαρακτηρίζει. Ib.

would forbear ſuch inſinuations in their controverſial writings. For as the ſame great Author ſays, *Wicked men do build upon our backs, and what we invent one of another, they make uſe of againſt us all.* Thoſe he ſpeaks of were expoſed to the hatred and ſcorn of the Heathens, for vilifying and diſparaging one another; and we may be laid open, by the ſame means, not only to the contempt of the Papiſts, but of thoſe too that make a mock of all Religion, who are many degrees worſe than any Heathens.

Τεκταίνουσι δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν νώτων ἡμῶν οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ, καὶ ἃ κατ' ἀλλήλων ἐπινοοῦμεν, κατὰ πάντων ἔχουσι. Ibid.

But after all the clamours about *licentious Clergymen*, it may be likely enough that they that make them may be overhaſty and credulous in receiving reports, and not judge with that candour and charity with which we ſhould examine other mens actions. For allowing ſome exceptions (which I hope conſidering our numbers will not be many) I do not ſee but that the *Conforming Clergy* in the general are of as circumſpect ſober inoffenſive a converſation, as any of their accuſers. It will not be adviſeable for either ſide to make compariſons of this nature. But he that knows of any one in Holy Orders, that is really guilty of ſuch vices, as make him *ſcandalous*; let him not preſently ſtrive to defame him, but be careful to pay him the love and reſpect that is due to the Character he bears, not for his own but for his Lord's ſake. St *Chryſoſtome* diſcourſes pretty largely to this purpoſe and for our incouragement to do ſo he tells us, [a] *Though the Prieſt ſhould be a debauched one, God ſeeing that by reaſon of the honour thou haſt for him, thou doſt honour one that is unworthy of it, he himſelf will give thee a reward.*

[a] Κἂν ὁ ἱερεὺς φαῦλος ᾖ, &c. Chryſoſt. in 2 Tim. Λογ. β.

But this is only a good intimation to others how they ſhould behave themſelves towards them, and not any

any thing that can palliate or excuſe any mans looſneſs and intemperance. Where any of the *Clergy* can be convicted of ſuch ſins as do openly diſparage his calling, let him ſuffer the ſeverity of the Law to the utmoſt rigour. And if thoſe Laws that are already in force be too gentle to reclaim him, I could wiſh that others might be made for the infliction of ſome greater puniſhment; provided they were ſuch as might tend effectually to the Reformation of notorious offenders, without expoſing the innocent to be continually moleſted by the vexatious proſecutions of reſtleſs and malicious men. If this may be avoided, nothing can be too ſevere. For there is no greater publick miſchief than a *ſcandalous Clergy*; it is the higheſt affront and diſhonour to Almighty God, and will certainly prove the inevitable ruine of any Church, where they are ſuffered to increaſe.

If theſe papers ſhould happen to fall into the hands of any one that is conſcious to himſelf of ſome guilt in that kind, I would beſeech him for the ſake of his deareſt Saviour who died for him, and whoſe profeſſed Servant he is, that if he have any regard to his own eternal happineſs, or any compaſſion for the wounds of a bleeding Church, he would ſeriouſly repent of all his former follies, and endeavour for the future to behave himſelf anſwerably to thoſe many obligations that lye upon him to a holy and blameleſs life. [a] There was an antient Law at *Athens* that no man that could be proved guilty of any groſs immoralities, ſhould preſume to make a ſpeech to the people upon pain of death, though he were the moſt eloquent and taking Orator in the whole City. That reſtraint which was thought neceſſary

[a] Vid. *Æſchin.* Orat. contra *Timarch.*

by the wiſdom of a heathen Republick, would not be unworthy the imitation of a Chriſtian Kingdom; though by this means we might be now and then in danger of loſing a very fine harangue. But at leaſt in the Church this prudent caution of theirs deſerves to be propoſed as an Example for us. If it were a Crime amongſt them, no leſs than capital, for men of debauched lives to ſpeak ſometimes in publick about ſecular affairs; what penalty can be ſevere enough for ſuch profligate wretches, when they ſhall dare adventure to undertake the conſtant miniſtry of the Goſpel? If they eſcape a ſentence here, it ſhall fall the more heavily upon them at the laſt day; when the Holy Office they have prophaned, and every Sermon they have delivered ſhall riſe up in Judgement againſt them. What lamentable gaſhes muſt they give, what violence muſt they continually offer to their Conſciences, whoſe unſanctified lives are a direct contradiction to that heavenly Doctrine they profeſs to teach? How do they mock the Almighty to his very face, that put themſelves into his immediate ſervice, and talk much of Repentance, and Mortification, and yet trample upon all God's holy commandments, and go on obſtinately in their diſobedience, and lye down and wallow in ſenſuality? How can they preach Chriſt crucified, that are not afraid to *crucifie him to themſelves afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame*; that pretend to be his Diſciples, and of his family, and do not only moſt perfidiouſly betray their Maſter, but revile him, and ſpit upon him, and nail him to the Croſs, which is more than *Judas* did. Theſe and the like conſiderations, if they are not already ſunk into perfect Atheiſm, ſhould make them tremble at the apprehenſions

Heb. 6. 6.

henſions of the divine vengeance, that, unleſs they amend betimes, will be poured out in the largeſt meaſures, upon ſuch impudent and horrible impieties.

I have heard that ſome of thoſe that are the moſt obnoxious, have expreſſed an extraordinary zeal for the *Church* of *England*, and inveighed very paſſionately againſt the Diſſenters. I would adviſe them hereafter to ſpare their pains; we do not deſire, nor ſtand in need of their help; their examples drive more away, than their arguments will ever be able to bring back. Such falſe friends do our cauſe more hurt than our open enemies; for theſe only make a breach in our Walls, which has been hitherto ſufficiently defended, but they carry the Plague into our bowels that may deſtroy thouſands.

But I hope there are but few of them amongſt us; I am ſure the infection, God be praiſed, has not been univerſal. And for thoſe that have been tainted, after they have repented heartily for the *Scandal* they have given, let them apply themſelves diligently to their ſtudies, and learn to take delight in their imployment; it will be the only way to prevent a relapſe. For Idleneſs and a certain kind of averſation for a man's own buſineſs may be generally obſerved to be one of the moſt fruitful Parents of debauchery. And for thoſe that may be offended with the lives of any of our *Clergy*, I would intreat them rather to be ſorrowfully affected with their failings, and labour for their amendment, than to behave themſelves as if they would inſult over us for that which is our greateſt trouble, and were glad of any pretence to derive an odium upon us. This I would deſire them ſeverally to conſider.

SECT. XIII.

We are told farther by ſome, that our *Clergy* are many of them *Proud* and *Ambitious*, of a ſcornful and faſtidious humour. This is a moſt fooliſh and hateful quality, and very unbecoming for any man, eſpecially a Chriſtian that ſerves a Lord that was himſelf the moſt ſtupendious pattern of humility and condeſcenſion. But it is moſt improper of all for thoſe that are the Embaſſadours of this Lord, that act in their places by his ſpecial Commiſſion, that are to advance the intereſt of his Kingdom, and take care of the meaneſt of his Subjects, and are bound to deſpiſe nothing, but the allurements and vanities of the World. *Pride* that looks every where very ugly, receives ſome additional deformities when it is found in them. And I cannot tell but that ſome of them may deſerve to be taxed for it, but I do not believe that they are ſo many that it ſhould juſtly reflect upon the whole Order. But there are ſome faults that men eaſily fancy, whereever they pleaſe to take a diſlike. And this is one of thoſe: The inferiour ſort when they are angry, will think every one *Proud*, whoſe cloaths are a little better than theirs; others will be of the ſame opinion, if they are not always treated with flattery and ſubmiſſion, and the moſt ſervile complyance. And the *Clergy* may lye under this imputation too, becauſe they may be forced ſometimes to vindicate the honour of their Calling, in an age that loves to have it deſpiſed; they may be thought to aſſume too much to themſelves, when they will not yield it to be ſo contemptible, as they would make it, whoſe

whoſe glory and intereſt it is to lay it low.

But the remedy that is preſcribed for this ſuppoſed diſtemper is an excellent good one. It has been imagined by ſome Projectors, that if the *Biſhops* were reduced to ſuch a mediocrity, as they ſhould be pleaſed to allow them, and *Deans* and *Chapters Lands*, and ſome other ſuperfluities were taken away, the *Clergy* then might be humble enough. A very wiſe and honeſt contrivance! As if Poverty were a certain cure for *Pride*; when they themſelves can tell that diſcontent, which may be occaſioned by the loſs of what they legally poſſeſſed, will make men more arrogant, haughty and ſelf-willed, than a very fair Eſtate, when it is peaceably injoyed. This expedient ſignifies no more but that there may be ſome very modeſt ſelf-denying men that long to be fingering the revenues of the Church. The incouragements that have been left the Clergy by the Piety of former times, are not now ſo very great, as to be the object of any man's envy; other Profeſſions make far more conſiderable advantages, which are not ſo much repined at by ſome of their neighbours. But whatever they be, they have as good a title in law, and as much property in them, as any other Freeholders have in thoſe Eſtates they account their own; and the ſame power that can deprive them of their Eccleſiaſtical preferments, may deveſt any man elſe of his paternal Inheritance. They that have any thing to loſe will be very cautious how they ſhake the foundations upon which the Right to all they have is built. If a Property by Law be diſregarded in one inſtance, it may be quickly extended to as many more as ſome men's malice or neceſſities ſhall have occaſion for. *Clergy* and *Lay-Malignants*

nants may be eaſily jumbled together by an honeſt confiding Sequeſtrator. Injuſtice ſeldom ſtops where it begins. Make a cut in the bank of the *Thames*, and let out the water, and then ſtand by and perſwade it, if you can, to run over none but the *Churches* Lands. I believe there may be more modern Examples; but I remember in the intended Reformation of *Watt Tyler* and *Jack Straw*, they were the ſame men that reſolved to have none but *Mendicants* for their Prieſts, and to diſpoſſeſs and deſtroy all other rich and landed men, as well as the *Biſhops* and dignifyed *Clergy*. Some that could be contented to ſee theſe laſt a little humbled by a retrenchment of their income, do ſcarce conſider whither that Principle does naturally lead them; for if it ſhould be thorowly followed, the beſt Nobility and Gentry in the Nation, may ſoon be mated again and overtop'd too, by Coblers and Draymen. But this is a way of bringing down the *Pride* of the *Clergy*, that is never like to be approved of by any, but men of deſperate fortunes, or very large and plyable Conſciences.

Tho. Walſingham Richard. 2.

There is another thing which the *Clergy* have been vulgarly charged with; and that is *Covetouſneſs*; and ſome that love mony well enough themſelves cannot indure to think that a *Clergyman* ſhould be guilty of ſuch a thriving ſin. And indeed if he be, I have nothing to ſay in his excuſe. But it is hard to judge who are really *Covetous*; unleſs it be thoſe that will do an unjuſt action for their own gain; and thoſe that refuſe to beſtow ſomething of what they have upon the poor. Theſe may be cenſured by us without breach of charity; but for others we muſt leave them to the ſearcher of hearts. But a *Clergyman* is commonly

ly esteemed to be *Covetous* when he will not be tamely cheated of what is apparently his due; to the impoverishment of himself and family, and all that shall succeed him. Other men would be unwilling to be tryed by these measures. I cannot tell what occasion any of the *Clergy* may have given for these complaints that have been brought against them; but I think I know many of them, that are so far from inriching themselves by unwarrantable means, that they would readily part with whatever they injoy, if the Peace and Unity of the Church might be purchased with all that they have. But I take these two last objections of *Pride* and *Covetousness* to be nothing else but spightful words thrown abroad by those that are desirous to revile us upon any pretence; and therefore I do not think them worthy to be farther considered.

SECT. XIV.

I shall proceed now to matters of greater concernment to the publick than these. Of late especially we have been very much alarmed with a mighty noise, of no body knows how many of the *Conforming Clergy* that are *Popishly affected*; and we are made to believe that they wait but a fair opportunity to declare themselves openly for the *Church of Rome*. And besides a great many other pretty names that have been invented, by ingenious men, to distinguish these from the *true Protestants*, there is one above all that has had the luck to hit the fancy of the better sort of the refined wits. It is that happy expression of *Papist in Masquerade*: some charitable man or other stumbled upon it, I know not

not how; but it has flown about like lightning. It was such a quaint Phrase, and so exactly fit for the purpose, that every body had it in his mouth immediately. And I confess I do not wonder that it took so strangely; it pleases me so, that I can never think of it, but I am ready to smile. Well; but since it is concluded that there must be such things as *Papists in Masquerade*, it were worth the while to know where they are. Sometimes we are told how many there are in and about the City of *London*, how many in each University, and other places. Sometimes we hear sad lamentations of the greatness of the danger, because these ambiguous animals cannot be discovered. They are next to invisible; like the Chamelion, they put on the colour of every thing they touch. Sometimes, because it is very hard to discern who these *Masqueraders* be, some very jealous people suspect us all, and they are half afraid, if the truth were known, that there are scarce any of us, but that do walk in the same disguise. Some of the most shrewd and judicious observers, if they do but meet us in the street, will look so wishtly at us, as if they would see whether we had not something pasted on upon our faces. It is a very pleasant invention this, to pretend to imagine that there are considerable numbers amongst us that appear for the present to be *Protestants*, but when the time shall serve, they will pluck off their vizards, and shew what they are. By this device there is hardly any of the *Church* of *England*, that can escape being suspected by some or other; and so many well meaning people, of an honest and hearty zeal, may be frighted out of our Communion, by their great fear and hatred of Popery, for

for which they are perſwaded that divers of us have a ſecret kindneſs. And I could not blame them, if there were the leaſt occaſion for ſuch a jealouſy.

But I do not underſtand what grounds they have for that ſurmize, who either do, or elſe would be thought to believe it. The *Engliſh Clergy* have been always eſteemed very ſound *Proteſtants*; they have ſtill made a very vigorous oppoſition againſt the innovations and incroachments of *Rome*. Many of the moſt eminent of them ſuffered Martyrdom in the days of Queen *Mary*; before the name of ſeparation was heard amongſt us. Many from the beginning of the Reformation down to our own times, have continually incountred the Popiſh adverſaries, with great learning, and anſwerable ſucceſs. Since the diſcovery of the late moſt horrid Plot, no men have been more forward than they to declare their abhorrency of all the falſe Doctrines and practices of the Roman Synagogue; and that generally throughout the Nation, as if they had been animated, as I believe they were, by the ſame Spirit. Inſomuch that it was commonly confeſſed that there was no ſort of men in the Kingdom that did exceed them for the worthy diſcharge of their Duty in that reſpect. And are not theſe arguments enough to aſſure us of their ſincerity? And what ſhould be the reaſon then, that they ſhould come to be ſuſpected for favourers of *Popery* all of a ſuddain? I muſt needs confeſs I am not able to imagine, if it be not this; that ſome are very angry with them, becauſe ſome of them, taking notice how the clouds did ſeem to drive from ſeveral quarters, have been a little afraid, that thoſe tempeſtuous winds, that were

like to ſhipwrack Church and State, did not all blow from the ſame point of the Compaſs. And ſome have been moſt highly provoked by this conjecture; but I hope their impatience does not argue any thing of guilt.

However it be, I am ſure the *Papiſts* themſelves do not take us for their friends, any more than we do them for ours. They have been perpetually bending the main of their force againſt the Church, as it is now by Law eſtabliſhed; they have incouraged our Diviſions, and to this end have ſent abroad their Emiſſaries, in divers ſhapes, to exerciſe their pretended Gifts in private; and of this we have unqueſtionable evidence, and examples. So that if there be any *Papiſts* indeed, in *Maſquerade*, we may eaſily know where to find them. They have been very kind to Diſſenters, and pleaded very earneſtly for their Liberty. It is not many years ago ſince they uſed what Intereſt they had to procure them an Indulgence; and hoped to bring their deſigns about in that popular way. This has been proved of late by ſeveral Witneſſes, and confeſſed by themſelves. The *Conformiſts* were ſenſible of it at the firſt; and have been ſufficiently derided, and cenſured for expreſſing their zeal againſt *Popery* upon that occaſion. After this our diſſenting Brethren do beſt underſtand what incouragement they had to make their applications, as ſome of them did, to ſome of the principal men of the *Romiſh* faction. It ſeems to have been either a confidence of ſome good will they bore to them, or elſe a ſenſe of the hatred they had for us. I will not undertake to determine which of theſe it might be; but one of them no doubt it was. But it is very unjuſt that we ſhould be thought to

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be *Popiſhly affected*, whom they have indeavoured by all means poſſible to undermine; when others that have been apparently befriended by them, paſs for good unſuſpected *Proteſtants*.

Beſides, there is not any Principle entertained by the *Church* of *England* that has the leaſt affinity with any *Popiſh* Doctrine. But amongſt thoſe that have ſeparated from us, there have been ſome that have deny'd the King's Supremacy in Eccleſiaſtical affairs; ſome that have thought it lawful to depoſe and murder Soveraign Princes; ſome that have diſavowed the ſufficiency of the Scriptures, and conceived themſelves to be guided by an infallible Spirit; and if they could but learn the art of being handſomly perjured, and take Oaths, not according to the plain intent of the Law by which they are impoſed; but with ſome mental Reſervation of their own, I do not ſee almoſt what could be deſired farther to make up the compleat Myſtery of *Jeſuitiſm*. I do not ſay, neither do I believe for all this, that they are ſo much as ordinary *Papiſts*, either in or out of *Maſquerade*; but if we ſhould give way to theſe idle ſuſpicions, we have certainly as much cauſe to be jealous of them, as they have of us. But we have a manifeſt argument how frivilous theſe conceits are; for it is well known that in the late Wars, and before, the cry of *Popery* was as great, and the *Conformiſts* were as confidently accuſed, as they are now; but when it came to the teſt, and they were violently ejected out of their livelyhoods, and many of them forced to fly into Popiſh Countries, there were but very few of them all, and thoſe of no very good Character, that did imbrace the *Romiſh* Religion. And what reaſon is there to ſuſpect

that we ſhould be more inclined that way now, than they were then? But there is no queſtion but the ſame men that are ſo ready to believe us *Papiſts*, can as eaſily, when it ſhall be for their turn, make us Turks, or Jews, or Heathens in *Maſquerade*.

SECT. XV.

Beſides this device of Popery, there is another almoſt as good as that, which has been much talked of. The people have been poſſeſſed with ſtrange fears, that the *Clergy* are mighty friends to *Arbitrary Government*. For it has been one main Policy of thoſe, whoſe Projects will never go on ſmoothly till Conformity be taken away, to charge us home with thoſe things that are the moſt odious, and the leaſt underſtood by thoſe that ſerve to make up the cry. But if any men can be ſo fooliſh as to deſire to introduce an *Arbitrary* Authority in the room of one that is directed by Law; the *Clergy* of all others have the leaſt reaſon to be fond of it. For they cannot but know themſelves to ly the moſt open and expoſed unto it, and that they ſhall be ſure to feel the firſt and ſevereſt laſhes of every uſurped and tyrannical power. Of which we have too freſh an inſtance to be wholly forgotten in this age. The only occaſion that I can imagine why they ſhould be traduced for this, which is ſo apparently contrary to their known Intereſt, is, becauſe they are not ſo ſuſpicious, as ſome others would ſeem to be. But thoſe that are bound, by their profeſſion, and the common rules of Chriſtianity, to entertain the moſt charitable opinion, that it is poſſible, for private men, may deſerve to be pardoned,

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if they cannot be unreaſonably jealous of their Prince.

He that were otherwiſe a ſtranger to our Affairs, and ſhould caſually hear the noiſe there has been for ſome time about *Arbitrary Government*, would be apt to think that either the People were ſick of their own happineſs, or that his Majeſty were reſolved to make himſelf as abſolute as the Grand *Seignior*, or the Great *Mogul*. For if all the gracious Declarations that have been made, and more than twenty years experience will not convince men of the extravagancy of ſuch a fear, they may be quickly fit for the Hoſpital of Incurables. Since the year Sixty we have had no Committee-men, and Sequeſtrators; no compounding for Eſtates, and decimations after that; no cantonizing of the Land amongſt a company of Major Generals: The ſupreme power has not been invaded by the fag end of a Houſe of Commons; nor ſnatched from them by a Council of Officers, and toſſed from one to another at the pleaſure of an unruly rabble of Souldiers. The Crown has not been fixed on the point of the Sword; but all things have gon on in a regular and legal way. And if our own knowledge did not ſufficiently aſſure us of this, we have the teſtimony of one that has lately written a kind of *Polititat Dialogue* very full of pretty fancyful ſpeculations, who tells us, *That as we have as Loyal Subjects as are any where to be found, ſo we have as gracious and good a Prince. I never*, ſays he, *having yet heard that he did, or attempted to do, any the leaſt Act of Arbitrary Power, in any publick concern; nor did ever take, or endeavour to take from any particular perſon the benefit of the Law.* This is honeſt and plain dealing, and we

Plato Redivivus p. 18.

we have no cauſe to queſtion the truth of theſe expreſſions. For if this Author were not a perſon of known Integrity and a *true Proteſtant*, it would yet be too great an abſurdity for the *Engliſh Gentleman* to impoſe ſo groſly upon the *Noble Venetian*; and he does not ſeem ſo mighty partial to our preſent form of Government, that he would be guilty of ſuch an *indecorum* to ſave the credit of all the Monarchs in *Europe*. But that is a thing that needs no proof; the moderation and equity of his Majeſties Reign is well enough known to all the World.

And why ſhould any one think that he can ever deſire to alter the temper of the Government, when it cannot be done without offering a very great violence to his own? But if ſuch an attempt ſhould be made, and ſucceed too, (which are both very unlikely) it would be a great diminution of the Soveraign Power. For the Prince is the loſer, when the Subject is inſlaved; and he is in truth far more Abſolute that has the hearts of his People at his devotion, than he that treads upon their Backs. And how can it be thought that a good King that has the methods of Governing already laid out by wiſe and excellent Laws, and that has Authority enough for the ſecuring his own dignity, and the neceſſary defence of his dominions, ſhould forfeit the affections of his Subjects, and hazard all, by a vain indeavour to overturn the whole frame of the received Eſtabliſhment, and ſet up his own will inſtead of it; when the moſt unlimited Powers are forced to preſcribe ſome Laws to themſelves, and neceſſitated to govern by certain Rules? It is almoſt impoſſible that he that has a legal Right ſhould ever be *Arbitrary*,

bitrary, but he that is an Uſurper muſt needs be ſo. For he that is not ſupported by the Law, can be maintained by nothing but a ſtanding force.

But after all the ſtir we have had about it, it might be worth the conſidering, whether *Arbitrary Obedience*, be not every whit as dangerous as *Arbitrary Government*? For my part I look upon them as the ſame thing; only that one is but juſt ſpringing up, and the other is come to its full growth. I am ſure thoſe that have made the greateſt clutter about Liberty, and have been the moſt backward to *Obey*, as ſoon as ever they have gotten any Power into their hands, have commonly proved the moſt mercyleſs Tyrants. And all wiſe men will be very careful that they be not wheedled into ſlavery, by the threadbare pretences of preſerving thoſe Liberties, that are not invaded, and removing of grievances, where there are none. The Government we live under is ſo excellently tempered, that nothing can be more prudently fitted to the mutual happineſs and ſatisfaction of Prince, and People; unleſs there ſhould happen a miſunderſtanding betwixt them, which they that aim at the ruine of both, will be very ſtudious to foment; But they that injoy the benefit of ſuch a Conſtitution, have all the reaſon imaginable to be contented. But it is the higheſt injuſtice to accuſe the *Clergy* for favouring an unknown *Arbitrary Power*, when they deſire to be always governed by the Laws; and ſuch Laws as have the greateſt regard to the Subjects freedom of any in the World.

SECT.

SECT. XVI.

There is one objection more which is ſometimes brought out upon ſpecial occaſions, and that is, when they cannot be prevailed with to join themſelves with any number of Malecontents, then the *Clergy* muſt be complained of for being overbuſy in *medling* with *State Affairs*, if they do but dare to ſpeak any thing that may tend to the quieting of mens minds. And if they were indeed ſomething guilty of what they are taxed with, they might hope to eſcape in a crowd of offenders, who are as little concerned, and yet will be offering at publick Buſineſs. This is not ſo much their peculiar blame, as it is the common fault of the times. Heretofore amongſt the wiſeſt nations it was eſteemed a matter of ſome dfficulty to make a compleat *Stateſmen*; it was thought to require a good natural capacity, great induſtry, diligent obſervation, and ſome competent age and experience. But of late theſe Northern parts have been moſt wonderfully inſpired with *Politicks*. We have a ſort of *Stateſmen* that are ſhot up, like Muſhromes after a thunder-ſhower; ſome that never ſaw twenty yet; and others as good as they, that can ſcarce write or read: Some that have pickt up all their skill at the Theatre, and the Tavern; and ſome that have learnt as much at the Plowtail. You can hardly meet with a man that is not able at leaſt to entertain you with the News of the times, and make moſt notable remarques upon it. Every pert fellow can give his judgement of the whole State of the Kingdom, more readily and confidently a great deal, than thoſe that have

have taken ſome pains to conſider it. 'Tis a dull-pated Mechanick indeed that can't correct the miſtakes of the Council Table, and tell how every thing ought to be ordered, and talk ſhrewdly about it, whether he underſtand it, or not. This would have been looked on as a Prodigy amongſt the old heavy-headed Senators of *Rome*: If their City and Country had bred but one of ſuch monſtrous parts, we ſhould have had it recorded in *Livy*, and no doubt there had been ſacrifices appointed to avert the *Omen*. But I do not think that this ſtrange crop of *Politicians* that is ſprung out of the ground in our days, can portend any Ill; unleſs by degrees they ſhould happen to grow too wiſe to be governed. But in the mean time the *Clergy* may be well excuſed, if they have gotten a ſpice of the common diſeaſe: where it is become Epidemical, it is hard to eſcape without ſomething of infection.

But for all this, I have not obſerved that they have been ſo mighty buſy in *State Affairs* as has been pretended. Many of thoſe that accuſe them for this, may be proved more faulty themſelves. And if any one will be pleaſed to take the pains to turn over moſt of the Sermons that were preached, by another ſort of men, in the late Troubles, he will eaſily perceive that the Pulpits then were far more zealous to ſtir up the people to rebellion and bloodſhed, than they are now to perſwade them to peace, and ſubmiſſion to their Governours. And yet this is the main occaſion for which many of the *Conformiſts* are clamoured againſt; they are preſently branded for *medling* with matters of *State*, if they do but teach their hearers to be obedient to Magiſtrates, and are not furniſhed with Jeſuitical diſtinc-

ctions to ſhew in what caſes, it may be lawful to take up Arms againſt the King. They cannot avoid being reviled by ſome, if upon a *Thirtieth of January* they declare themſelves heartily againſt the Murder of our late Soveraign. They have been reproached, and aſſaulted too, for coming to give their voices for ſome worthy Gentlemen to ſerve in Parliament; when the Journey-men and Apprentices of very inferiour Trades, have been incouraged to concern themſelves in *State Affairs* of the greateſt importance. It is very hard that they ſhould be the only perſons that may not quietly injoy the unqueſtionable priviledges of every free-holder. But the truth is they will not be ingaged on that ſide that ſome would have them, and therefore it is convenient that all their actions ſhould be miſrepreſented; if they could be perſwaded to wheel about, and join their indeavours with thoſe that now accuſe them, I believe they might meddle with *State Affairs*, as much as they pleaſed, without Offence.

SECT. XVII.

I have now examined ſome of the moſt vulgar *Objections* which uſe to be made againſt the *Conforming Clergy*; and ſome of them are ſo highly improbable, and very rare, that it would be difficult to prove any particular man concerned in the charge; and where ſome few offenders may be found, I do not think that their Example has ſpread its influence ſo far, that it ſhould juſtly blemiſh the reputation of the whole Order. But it might be worth the while to inquire, what is the great *fault*, that they are *generally guilty of*, which has cauſed them to be ſo publickly

lickly traduced under ſeveral pretences? It is not their *Ignorance*; of which they may poſſibly clear themſelves as well as others: It is not their *Debauched* lives; ſince many of them are known to be of a very blameleſs and exemplary behaviour: It is not their *Covetouſneſs*, nor their *Pride*; for though theſe are very great ſins, yet they are not always eaſie to be diſcerned: It is not their being inclined to *Popery*; againſt which they have ſo conſtantly declared and given all the aſſurances imaginable, ever ſince the beginning of the Reformation: It is not any favour they can have for an *Arbitrary Power*; which muſt needs be very injurious to them; and which no men have oppoſed more than they, by ſtanding firm to the eſtabliſhed Laws: It is not a buſie pragmatical humour of *intermedling* with matters of *State*, where they have nothing to do; for I am confident any unprejudiced man will confeſs, that there were never fewer Political Queſtions debated in the Pulpit. But what can be the reaſon then, for which they have lien under ſuch ſtrange ſuſpitions, and been ſo ſpightfully reviled, eſpecially by thoſe who have never before expreſſed any thing of zeal upon a Religious account, and whoſe manner of living and diſcourſe will not ſuffer them to be admitted into the number of tender Conſciences? He that ſhall conſider the matter beſt will ſcarce be able to find out any other real cauſe, but only that the *Clergy* have a great diſlike to all manner of illegal innovations. They judge it unreaſonable that the whole Nation ſhould be involved in troubles and confuſion for the ſecurity of a few diſcontented men, who cannot think themſelves ſafe, and will never be pleaſed, till all things be bent to their own

humour; and not very long, if that could be done. They are not inamoured with every fine project, that may be set on foot; neither do they admire those for the wisest of all, that think themselves excellent at new-moulding of *States*. They suppose the King's Title may be good enough, though they do not know exactly how many Acres of Land may be held sufficient to confer a Right to the Sovereign Power. They take that man to have a huge barren Fancy that is not able to invent a thousand pretty models of an aery Republick in a twelve months time. But after all they believe that we might live as happily, if we pleased, under the *Form* that is already setled, as in Sr *Thomas More's Utopia*, or *Plato's* imaginary Common-wealth. They understand very well that there will be some casual miscarriages in the administration of all humane affairs, but they esteem it more becoming wise men and good Christians, to bear with those we are acquainted with, than to hazard the infinite mischiefs, and inconveniencies of a Change, which it is impossible either to foresee, or prevent. And therefore amongst the great uncertainties and vicissitudes of these earthly concerns, they are verily perswaded that our common safety will be best preserved by a pious dependance upon the Divine Providence; which they are not ashamed to own, though they should be laughed at for it by a few conceited scoffing Politicians. They are satisfied in their Consciences of the Lawfulness of our present Government, both in Church, and *State*, and hold themselves strictly bound to submit unto it, and make use of the best arguments they can to induce others to a complyance with all the just commands of their Superiours.

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And this is all I can tell of, that has opened the mouths of so many against them; this is the most unpardonable crime; and of this, as they have hitherto been, so I hope they will always continue to be guilty.

SECT. XVIII.

Having thus run over, and given some answer, as I promised, to many of the popular *Objections* which have been made against the present *Church* and *Clergy* of *England*; I shall proceed, to consider very briefly the *Means* that have been proposed for the *Uniting* of us, and our dissenting Brethren. This is a very noble and pious design; and he that does not heartily desire, and pray that all the World may become Christians, and that all Christians may be joined in the same holy Communion, wants that Charity that should make him a lively member of the Church, and is the greatest Schismatick; at least he has the seeds of all Schism within him, which will be ready to shew themselves upon any occasion. But there can be none amongst us, that has any sence of Religion, that does not seriously wish and indeavour for a happy *Union* and composure of all our Differences; but we have not yet seen the good effect of such a disposition. It may be it is because the methods of procuring it, that have been hitherto propounded, are not sufficient for the attainment of it. Two things especially have been thought upon as the fittest expedients, *Comprehension*, and *Toleration*; the one, as our present circumstances are, is not likely to succeed; the other does directly cross the end it pretends to aim at; as will appear if we consider them singly.

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By *Comprehension* is usually understood some kind of Relaxation to be made by Law, that some things which are the most scrupled being taken away, some of those that now separate from us, may be satisfied, and join themselves to the established Church. This is a thing that has been much discoursed of, and some thing has been attempted in it by men of several perswasions; and it has been variously censured, or approved, as the Parties have been differently affected. And it is confessed that those things that have been appointed meerly for external Order and decency, may be altered when it shall seem good to the same Power, that first injoined them. But then those that have submitted, and subscribed unto it, cannot believe that any such alteration is necessary to be made in our present Constitution; and if it should be made, they are afraid that it would bring but very few Dissenters into the Church; because they that scruple what is already in use, may upon the same grounds except against any thing else that can be prescribed. But yet if the wisdom of our Governours being, as is reasonable, before hand informed what will give satisfaction, should judge it expedient to make any concessions of this nature; I know no man that is not ready to join his hearty prayers that it may succeed, to the putting an end to all our Divisions, and the lasting peace and security of the Protestant Religion. But it is justly feared that this would not produce that happy effect which is so much desired by all good men; because most of those that differ from us seem now to be resolved against all manner of impositions, though it should be of things otherwise never so innocent; and then terms may be altered and inlarged,

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if it be thought fit, but whatever is done, they that will be true to this Principle cannot be *Comprehended* by any thing but their own pleasure.

Some therefore understanding well how ineffectual this is like to prove, have thought the only way to *Unite* us must be by a *Toleration*; and that either with some Restrictions, or without. An *unlimited Toleration* without any Restrictions, is condemned by most that pretend to any degree of sobriety; and if every man, as some have thought, have a natural Right to the choice and exercise of his own way of Worship, then a *Toleration* must be granted to all; and it cannot be *limited* without the manifest injury of those that are, or shall be excluded from the benefit of it, by such *limitation*. But however it be desired, whether *limited*, or *unlimited*, (which I think will never be perfectly agreed amongst those that are for it) the Conformists, out of the kindness they have for many well disposed people that may be misled, would be very much inclined to a *Toleration*, if besides the other great inconveniencies that would follow, they had not these exceptions against it.

It does not seem to be equal dealing that our Dissenters should lay claim to such an *Indulgence*, which all sorts of them have most rigorously denyed to others, whereever they have had the Power to do it; and divers of them now will not allow their Children, and Servants that liberty which they expect themselves, in the exercise of their Religion.

And it is observable, that whereas the best Emperours have made the severest Laws against all manner

ner of Sectaries, [b] *Julian* the *Apoſtate*, the moſt ſubtile and bitter enemy that Chriſtianity ever had, was the man that ſet up this way of *toleration*. For he ſent for the Prelates and ſome others of the ſeveral Sects of Chriſtians, and when they were come into the Palace, he adviſes them very kindly, as it might ſeem, to lay aſide their differences, and that every one ſhould attend upon his own Religion, and never fear, becauſe no body ſhould hinder any of them of that freedom. Here was as much *liberty*, and as readily granted as any man could wiſh; but he did not intend any advantage to Chriſtianity by it: No; he hoped by the licence he gave them to increaſe their diſſentions, that ſo he might have the leſs reaſon to fear their unanimous oppoſing of his grand Deſign, which was to reſtore Paganiſm, and Idolatry again. This is hinted in ſome Eccleſiaſtical [c] *Hiſtoriani*, but no where ſo fully laid open, as it is done by *Ammianus Marcellinus*, who was moſt likely to know the whole ſecret of the buſineſs; for he had been a Souldier in *Julian*'s Army, and was a Heathen too, though not ſo great a Zealot as his Maſter. But by this any one may ſee that the moſt implacable, cunning, and dangerous Adverſary that the Devil ever raiſed up to oppoſe the Goſpel of Chriſt, did of his own accord, deviſe and procure a *Toleration*, as the moſt likely means utterly to deſtroy the Chriſtian Faith, and to revive a moſt groſs, obſolete, Superſtitious, Idolatrous Religion. Which is enough to ſhew that this fair and plauſible invention may be deſigned for very bad purpoſes.

[b] *Planis abſolutiſque decretis aperiri Templa, arſique hoſtias admoveri, & reparari Deorum ſtatuit cultum. Utque diſpoſitorum roboraret effectum, diſſidentes Chriſtianorum antiſtites cum plebe diſciſſa in palatium intromiſſos monebat, ut civilibus diſcordiis conſopitis, quiſque nullo vetante, religioni ſuæ ſerviret intrepidus. Quod agebat ideo obſtinatè, ut diſſenſiones augente licentia, non timeret unanimantem poſtea plebem.* Am. Marcellin. *lib.* 22.

[c] Vid. *Sozom.* lib. 5. cap. 5.

And

And we have reaſon to ſuſpect it the more, becauſe is it well known that the *Papiſts* have always indeavoured to widen our differences, and when they had been pretty ſucceſsful in that, they were of late become earneſt Sollicitours for the *Indulging* of *Proteſtant* Diſſenters; but ſure no man will believe that this could proceed from any particular kindneſs they owed them, more than us. But only they hoped that by this means our Diviſions might be eaſily multiplied, and the Church of *England* by conſequence exceedingly weakened; and then they knew they ſhould have the moſt promiſing opportunity of working their ends upon us all. For when this is done, they may freely ſend abroad their *Emiſſaries* in the likeneſs of *Anabaptiſts*, *Quakers*, *Fifth-Monarchy* men, or what other ſhape they pleaſe to aſſume: And when they have broken us into ſeveral ſcattered independant troops, that are not agreed among themſelves in what manner to reſiſt the Enemy, they may overcome us with leſs difficulty, than if we were joined in one regular, intire, well diſciplined Body. And that this has been their grand deſign is not a meer conjecture of ours; we have evidence, and witneſſes of it, which cannot be queſtioned. Therefore many *Conformiſts* that take no delight in ſeeing the Laws ſeverely executed, are yet very apprehenſive of the danger of a *Toleration*; for they are much afraid that if it were once granted, the effect of it would rather be what has been hoped for by the *Popiſh Agents*, than what was intended by thoſe, at whoſe immediate inſtance it might be procured.

But whatever the iſſue ſhould be, it is certain it would be any thing ſooner than an *Union*; for it

would be a plain ſettlement and incouraging of our diviſions by giving them the countenance and protection of the Law. And if ſuch a thing ſhould ever chance to paſs into an Act; that when it was done, would only take away the penalty laid upon it by the Civil Power, but could not alter the nature of *Separation*, The *Church* of *England* requires no unlawful terms of Communion, and if the withdrawing from ſuch a Church were a ſin before, it will always be ſo, whatever Statute ſhould be made to allow it. For no humane Authority can diſpenſe with any of the divine commands. So that though it be very deſireable, eſpecially at this time, that the whole *Proteſtant* Intereſt ſhould be firmly *united*, yet this *Union* which it is feared will ſcarce be effected by a *Comprehenſion*, will undoubtedly be quite overthrown by a *Toleration*.

SECT. XIX.

I have now conſidered the *Conſtitution* of our *Church*; ſome *Objections* that are wont to be made againſt that, and the *Clergy*; and the *means* of *Union* that have been thought the moſt likely to take effect. I have gon over all with as much brevity as I could, and without any expreſſions that can give any juſt occaſion of diſtaſte; but I have made uſe of that great plainneſs, and freedom, that ſeldom procures a man many friends. But I hope none can be offended, but thoſe that are conſcious to themſelves of ſome unwarrantable Deſigns; and if one chance to hit upon a ſore place, men will cry out, and be angry, though you touch them never ſo gentlely. What miſtakes I may have commited, I am ready and willing to correct.

I think

I think the *Church* of *England* to be the beſt conſtituted of any in the World, according to the Scriptures, and the pattern of the firſt and pureſt times. And if there ſhould be any thing in it that any one could wiſh amended, it ſhould be born with patience, till it may be corrected, not by the popular clamours of private men, but the deliberate Advice of thoſe in Authority.

The *Conforming Clergy*, for ought I know, are men generally of good worth and blameleſs lives; and if there ſhould be any that are not ſuch, they are to be intreated preſently to reform, and by their future behaviour to make ſome ſatisfaction for the Scandal they have brought upon their Profeſſion. And if they have been ſomething wronged by falſe reports, it will be their moſt pious courſe to make a good uſe of the moſt ſpightful detraction, to be reminded of their Duty by the malice of their Enemies, and to extract an Antidote out of the poyſon of Aſps that is under their tongues.

And now for a happy *Union*, which all Parties pretend to deſire, I fear that it can never be had, or that it will not indure long, till men do lay aſide all prejudice, and paſſion, and maintain a kind and charitable inclination one for another; till they have an awful reſpect for their Superiours, and an humble reverence For Almighty God. But if this were done, it might be hoped that a ſerious application of the mind to the more weighty Duties of Religion, would in great meaſure ſilence the Controverſies about indifferent things. The real Piety of the members of it, is the ſureſt foundation of the Churches Peace.

FINIS.